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LEAP YEAR.

THE ROOM IN THE DRAGON VOLANT.

BY J. S. LE FANU.

PART I.—CHAPTER I.

ON THE ROAD.

IN the eventful year, 1815, I was exactly three-and-twenty, and had just succeeded to a very large sum in consols, and other securities. The first fall of Napoleon had thrown the continent open to English excursionists, anxious, let us suppose, to improve their minds by foreign travel; and I—the slight check of the ‘hundred days’ removed, by the genius of Wellington, on the field of Waterloo—was now added to the philosophic throng.

I was posting up to Paris from Bruxelles, following, I presume, the route that the allied army had pursued but a few weeks before—more carriages than you could believe, were pursuing the same line. You could not look back or forward, without seeing into far perspective the clouds of dust which marked the line of the long series of vehicles. We were, perpetually, passing relays of return-horses, on their way, jaded and dusty, to the inns from which they had been taken. They were arduous times for those patient public servants. The whole world seemed posting up to Paris.

I ought to have noted it more particularly, but my head was so full of Paris and the future, that I passed the intervening scenery with little patience, and less attention; I think, however, that it was about four miles to the frontier side of a rather picturesque little town, the name of which, as of many more important places through which I posted in my hurried journey, I forgot, and

about two hours before sunset, that we came up with a carriage in distress.

It was not quite an upset. But the two leaders were lying flat. The booted postillions had got down, and two servants who seemed very much at sea in such matters, were by way of assisting them. A pretty little bonnet and head were popped out of the window of the carriage in distress. Its *tournure*, and that of the shoulders that also appeared for a moment, was captivating: I resolved to play the part of a good Samaritan; stopped my chaise, jumped out, and with my servant lent a very willing hand in the emergency. Alas! the lady with the pretty bonnet, wore a very thick, black veil. I could see nothing but the pattern of the Bruxelles lace, as she drew back.

A lean old gentleman, almost at the same time, stuck his head out of the window. An invalid he seemed, for although the day was hot, he wore a black muffler which came up to his ears and nose, quite covering the lower part of his face; an arrangement which he disturbed by pulling it down for a moment, and poured forth a torrent of French thanks, as he uncovered his black wig, and gesticulated with grateful animation.

One of my very few accomplishments besides boxing, which was cultivated by all Englishmen at that time, was French; and I replied, I hope and believe, grammatically. Many bows being exchanged, the old gentleman’s

head went in again, and the demure, pretty little bonnet once more appeared.

The lady must have heard me speak to my servant, for she framed her little speech in such pretty, broken English, and in a voice so sweet, that I more than ever cursed the black veil that baulked my romantic curiosity.

The arms that were emblazoned on the panel were peculiar; I remember especially, one device, it was the figure of a stork, painted in carmine, upon what the heralds call a 'field or.' The bird was standing upon one leg, and in the other claw held a stone. This is, I believe, the emblem of vigilance. Its oddity struck me, and remained impressed upon my memory. There were supporters besides, but I forgot what they were.

The courtly manners of these people, the style of their servants, the elegance of their travelling carriage, and the supporters to their arms, satisfied me that they were noble.

The lady, you may be sure, was not the less interesting on that account. What a fascination a title exercises upon the imagination! I do not mean on that of snobs or moral flunkies. Superiority of rank is a powerful and genuine influence in love. The idea of superior refinement is associated with it. The careless notice of the squire tells more upon the heart of the pretty milk-maid, than years of honest Dobbin's many devotion, and so on and up. It is an unjust world!

But in this case there was something more. I was conscious of being good-looking. I really believe I was; and there could be no mistake about my being nearly six feet high. Why need this lady have thanked me? Had not her husband, for such I assumed him

to be, thanked me quite enough, and for both? I was instinctively aware that the lady was looking on me with no unwilling eyes; and, through her veil, I felt the power of her gaze.

She was now rolling away, with a train of dust behind her wheels, in the golden sunlight, and a wise young gentleman followed her with ardent eyes, and sighed profoundly as the distance increased.

I told the postillions on no account to pass the carriage, but to keep it steadily in view, and to pull up at whatever posting-house it should stop at. We were soon in the little town, and the carriage we followed drew up at the Belle Etoile, a comfortable old inn. They got out of the carriage and entered the house.

At a leisurely pace we followed. I got down, and mounted the steps, listlessly, like a man quite apathetic and careless.

Audacious as I was, I did not care to inquire in what room I should find them. I peeped into the apartment to my right, and then into that on my left. *My* people were not there.

I ascended the stairs. A drawing-room door stood open. I entered with the most innocent air in the world. It was a spacious room, and, beside myself, contained but one living figure—a very pretty and lady-like one. There was the very bonnet with which I had fallen in love. The lady stood with her back toward me. I could not tell whether the envious veil was raised; she was reading a letter.

I stood for a minute in fixed attention, gazing upon her, in the vague hope that she might turn about, and give me an opportunity of seeing her features. She did not; but with a step or two she placed herself before a little

cabriole-table, which stood against the wall, from which rose a tall mirror, in a tarnished frame.

I might, indeed, have mistaken it for a picture; for it now reflected a half-length portrait of a singularly beautiful woman.

She was looking down upon a letter which she held in her slender fingers, and in which she seemed absorbed.

The face was oval, melancholy, sweet. It had in it, nevertheless, a faint and undefinably sensual quality also. Nothing could exceed the delicacy of its features, or the brilliancy of its tints. The eyes, indeed, were lowered, so that I could not see their colour; nothing but their long lashes, and delicate eyebrows. She continued reading. She must have been deeply interested; I never saw a living form so motionless—I gazed on a tinted statue.

Being at that time blessed with long and keen vision, I saw this beautiful face with perfect distinctness. I saw even the blue veins that traced their wanderings on the whiteness of her full throat.

I ought to have retreated as noiselessly as I came in, before my presence was detected. But I was too much interested to move from the spot, for a few moments longer; and while they were passing, she raised her eyes. Those eyes were large, and of that hue which modern poets term 'violet.'

These splendid melancholy eyes were turned upon me from the glass, with a haughty stare, and hastily the lady lowered her black veil, and turned about.

I fancied that she hoped I had not seen her. I was watching every look and movement, the minutest, with an attention as intense as if an ordeal involving my life depended on them.

CHAPTER II.

THE INN-YARD OF THE BELLE ETOILE.

The face was, indeed, one to fall in love with at first sight. Those sentiments that take such sudden possession of young men, were now dominating my curiosity. My audacity faltered before her; and I felt that my presence in this room was probably an impertinence. This point she quickly settled, for the same very sweet voice I had heard before, now said coldly, and this time in French, 'Monsieur cannot be aware that this apartment is not public.'

I bowed very low, faltered some apologies, and backed to the door.

I suppose I looked penitent and embarrassed. I certainly felt so; for the lady said, by way it seemed of softening matters, 'I am happy, however, to have an opportunity of again thanking monsieur for the assistance, so prompt and effectual, which he had the goodness to render us to-day.'

It was more the altered tone in which it was spoken, than the speech itself that encouraged me. It was also true that she need not have recognized me; and even if she had, she certainly was not obliged to thank me over again.

All this was indescribably flattering, and all the more so that it followed so quickly on her slight reproof.

The tone in which she spoke had become low and timid, and I observed that she turned her head quickly towards a second door of the room, I fancied that the gentleman in the black wig, a jealous husband, perhaps, might reappear through it. Almost at the same moment, a voice at once reedy and nasal, was heard snarl-

ing some directions to a servant, and evidently approaching. It was the voice that had thanked me so profusely, from the carriage windows, about an hour before.

'Monsieur will have the goodness to retire,' said the lady, in a tone that resembled entreaty, at the same time gently waving her hand toward the door through which I had entered. Bowing again very low, I stepped back, and closed the door.

I ran down the stairs, very much elated. I saw the host of the *Belle Etoile* which, as I said, was the sign and designation of my inn.

I described the apartment I had just quitted, said I liked it, and asked whether I could have it.

He was extremely troubled, but that apartment and two adjoining rooms were engaged—

'By whom?'

'People of distinction.'

'But who are they? They must have names, or titles.'

'Undoubtedly, monsieur, but such a stream is rolling into Paris, that we have ceased to inquire into the names or titles of our guests—we designate them simply by the rooms they occupy.'

'What stay do they make?'

'Even that, monsieur, I cannot answer. It does not interest us. Our rooms, while this continues, can never be, for a moment, disengaged.'

'I should have liked those rooms so much! Is one of them a sleeping apartment?'

'Yes, sir, and monsieur will observe that people do not usually engage bed-rooms, unless they mean to stay the night.'

'Well, I can, I suppose, have some rooms, any, I don't care in what part of the house?'

'Certainly, monsieur can have two apartments. They are the last at present disengaged.'

'I took them instantly.'

It was plain these people meant to make a stay here; at least they would not go till morning. I began to feel that I was all but engaged in an adventure.

I took possession of my rooms, and looked out of the window, which I found commanded the inn-yard. Many horses were being liberated from the traces, hot and weary, and others fresh from the stables, being put to. A great many vehicles—some private carriages, others, like mine, of that public class, which is equivalent to our old English post-chaise, were standing on the pavement, waiting their turn for relays. Fussy servants were to-ing and fro-ing, and idle ones lounging or laughing, and the scene, on the whole, was animated and amusing.

Among these objects, I thought I recognized the travelling carriage, and one of the servants of the 'persons of distinction' about whom I was, just then, so profoundly interested.

I therefore ran down the stairs, made my way to the back door; and so, behold me, in a moment, upon the uneven pavement, among all these sights and sounds which in such a place attend upon a period of extraordinary crush and traffic.

By this time the sun was near its setting, and threw its golden beams on the red brick chimneys of the offices, and made the two barrels, that figured as pigeon-houses, on the tops of poles, look as if they were on fire. Everything in this light becomes picturesque; and things interest us which, in the sober grey of morning, are dull enough.

After a little search, I lighted upon the very carriage, of which I was in quest. A servant was locking one of the doors, for it was made with the security of

lock and key. I paused near, looking at the panel of the door.

'A very pretty device that red stork!' I observed, pointing to the shield on the door, 'and no doubt indicates a distinguished family?'

The servant looked at me, for a moment, as he placed the little key in his pocket, and said with a slightly sarcastic bow and smile, 'Monsieur is at liberty to conjecture.'

Nothing daunted, I forthwith administered that laxative which, on occasion, acts so happily upon the tongue—I mean a 'tip.'

The servant looked at the napoleon in his hand, and then, in my face, with a sincere expression of surprise.

'Monsieur is very generous!'

'Not worth mentioning—who are the lady and gentleman who came here, in this carriage, and whom, you may remember, I and my servant assisted to-day in an emergency, when their horses had come to the ground?'

'They are the Count, and the young lady we call the Countess—but I know not, she may be his daughter.'

'Can you tell me where they live?'

'Upon my honour, monsieur, I am unable—I know not.'

'Not know where your master lives! Surely you know something more about him than his name?'

'Nothing worth relating, monsieur; in fact, I was hired in Bruxelles, on the very day they started. Monsieur Picard, my fellow servant, monsieur the comte's gentleman, he has been years in his service and knows everything; but he never speaks except to communicate an order. From him I have learned nothing. We are going to Paris, however, and there I shall speedily pick up all about them. At present I am

as ignorant of all that as monsieur himself.'

'And where is Monsieur Picard?'

'He has gone to the cutler's to get his razors set. But I do not think he will tell anything.'

This was a poor harvest for my golden sowing. The man, I think, spoke truth, and would honestly have betrayed the secrets of the family, if he had possessed any. I took my leave politely; and mounting the stairs, again I found myself once more in my room.

Forthwith I summoned my servant. Though I had brought him with me from England, he was a native of France—a useful fellow, sharp, bustling, and, of course, quite familiar with the ways and tricks of his countrymen.

'St. Clair, shut the door; come here. I can't rest till I have made out something about those people of rank who have got the apartments under mine. Here are fifteen francs; make out the servants we assisted to-day; have them to a *petit souper*, and come back and tell me their entire history. I have, this moment, seen one of them who knows nothing, and has communicated it. The other, whose name I forget, is the unknown nobleman's valet, and knows everything. Him you must pump. It is, of course, the venerable peer, and not the young lady who accompanies him, that interests me—you understand? Begone! fly! and return with all the details I sigh for, and every circumstance that can possibly interest me.'

It was a commission which admirably suited the tastes and spirits of my worthy St. Clair, to whom, you will have observed, I had accustomed myself to talk with the peculiar familiarity which the old French comedy establishes between master and valet.

I am sure he laughed at me in

secret; but nothing could be more polite and deferential.

With several wise looks, nods and shrugs, he withdrew; and looking down from my window, I saw him, with incredible quickness, enter the yard, where I soon lost sight of him among the carriages.

CHAPTER III.

DEATH AND LOVE TOGETHER MATED.

When the day drags, when a man is solitary, and in a fever of impatience and suspense; when the minute-hand of his watch travels as slowly as the hour-hand used to do, and the hour-hand has lost all appreciable motion; when he yawns, and beats the devil's tattoo, and flattens his handsome nose against the window, and whistles tunes he hates, and, in short, does not know what to do with himself, it is deeply to be regretted that he cannot make a solemn dinner of three courses more than once in a day. The laws of matter, to which we are slaves, deny us that resource,

But in the times I speak of, supper was still a substantial meal, and its hour was approaching. This was consolatory. Three-quarters of an hour, however, still interposed. How was I to dispose of that interval?

I had two or three idle books, it is true, as travelling-companions; but there are many moods in which one cannot read. My novel lay with my rug and walking-stick on the sofa, and I did not care if the heroine and the hero were both drowned together in the water-barrel that I saw in the inn-yard under my window.

I took a turn or two up and down my room, and sighed, looked at myself in the glass, adjusted my great white 'choker,' folded and tied after Brummel, the im-

mortal 'Beau,' put on a buff waist-coat and my blue swallow-tailed coat with gilt buttons; I deluged my pocket handkerchief with eau-de-cologne (we had not then the variety of bouquets with which the genius of perfumery has since blessed us); I arranged my hair, on which I piqued myself, and which I loved to groom in those days. That dark-brown *chevelure*, with a natural curl, is now represented by a few dozen perfectly white hairs, and its place—a smooth, bald, pink head—knows it no more. But let us forget these mortifications. It was then rich, thick, and dark-brown. I was making a very careful toilet. I took my unexceptionable hat from its case, and placed it lightly on my wise head, as nearly as memory and practice enabled me to do so, at that very slight inclination which the immortal person I have mentioned was wont to give to his. A pair of light French gloves and a rather club-like knotted walking-stick, such as just then came into vogue, for a year or two again in England, in the phraseology of Sir Walter Scott's romances, 'completed my equipment.'

All this attention to effect, preparatory to a mere lounge in the yard, or on the steps of the *Belle Etoile*, was a simple act of devotion to the wonderful eyes which I had that evening beheld for the first time, and never, never could forget! In plain terms, it was all done in the vague, very vague hope that those eyes might behold the unexceptionable get-up of a melancholy slave, and retain the image, not altogether without secret approbation.

As I completed my preparations the light failed me; the last level streak of sunlight disappeared, and a fading twilight only remained. I sighed in unison with the pensive hour, and threw open the

window, intending to look out for a moment before going downstairs. I perceived instantly that the window underneath mine was also open, for I heard two voices in conversation, although I could not distinguish what they were saying.

The male voice was peculiar; it was, as I told you, reedy and nasal. I knew it, of course, instantly. The answering voice spoke in those sweet tones which I recognised only too easily. The dialogue was only for a minute; the repulsive male voice laughed, I fancied, with a kind of devilish satire, and retired from the window, so that I almost ceased to hear it.

The other voice remained nearer the window, but not so near as at first.

It was not an altercation; there was evidently nothing the least exciting in the colloquy. What would I not have given that it had been a quarrel—a violent one—and I the redresser of wrongs, and the defender of insulted beauty! Alas! so far as I could pronounce upon the character of the tones I heard, they might be as tranquil a pair as any in existence. In a moment more the lady began to sing an odd little *chanson*. I need not remind you how much farther the voice is heard *singing* than speaking. I could distinguish the words. The voice was of that exquisitely sweet kind which is called, I believe, a semi-contralto; it had something pathetic, and something, I fancied, a little mocking in its tones. I venture a clumsy, but adequate translation of the words:—

‘Death and Love, together mated,
Watch and wait in ambuscade;
At early morn, or else belated,
They meet and mark the man or maid.

‘Burning sigh, or breath that freezes,
Numb or maddens man or maid;
Death or Love the victim seizes,
Breathing from their ambuscade.’

‘Enough, madame!’ said the old voice, with sudden severity. ‘We do not desire, I believe, to amuse the grooms and hostlers in the yard with our music.’

The lady’s voice laughed gaily.

‘You desire to quarrel, madame?’
And the old man, I presume, shut down the window. Down it went, at all events, with a rattle that might easily have broken the glass.

Of all thin partitions, glass is the most effectual excluder of sound. I heard no more, not even the subdued hum of the colloquy.

What a charming voice this Countess had! How it melted, swelled, and trembled! How it moved, and even agitated me! What a pity that a hoarse old jack-daw should have power to crow down such a Philomel! ‘Alas! what a life it is!’ I moralized, wisely. ‘That beautiful Countess, with the patience of an angel and the beauty of a Venus and the accomplishments of all the Muses, is a slave! She knows perfectly who occupies the apartments over hers; she heard me raise my window. One may conjecture pretty well for whom that music was intended—ay, old gentleman, and for whom you suspected it to be intended.’

In a very agreeable flutter I left my room, and descending the stairs, passed the Count’s door very much at my leisure. There was just a chance that the beautiful songstress might emerge. I dropped my stick on the lobby near their door, and you may be sure it took me some little time to pick it up! Fortune, nevertheless, did not favour me. I could not stay on the lobby all night picking up my stick, so I went down to the hall.

I consulted the clock, and found that there remained but a quarter of an hour to the moment of supper.

Every one was roughing it now, every inn in confusion; people



THE ROOM IN THE DRAGON VOLANT.

Drawn by J. A. Pasquier.]

might do at such a juncture what they never did before. Was it just possible that, for once, the Count and Countess would take their chairs at the table-d'hôte?

CHAPTER IV.

MONSIEUR DROUVILLE.

Fulf of this exciting hope, I sauntered out, upon the steps of the Belle Etoile. It was now night, and a pleasant moonlight over everything. I had entered now into my romance since my arrival, and this poetic light heightened the sentiment. What a drama, if she turned out to be the Count's daughter, and in love with me! What a delightful—*tragedy*, if she turned out to be the Count's wife!

In this luxurious mood, I was accosted by a tall and very elegantly-made gentleman, who appeared to be about fifty. His air was courtly and graceful, and there was in his whole manner and appearance something so distinguished, that it was impossible not to suspect him of being a person of rank.

He had been standing upon the steps, looking out, like me, upon the moonlight effects that transformed, as it were, the objects and buildings in this little street. He accosted me, I say, with the politeness, at once easy and lofty, of a French nobleman of the old school. He asked me if I were not *Beckett*? I assented; and he promptly introduced himself as *Le Marquis d'Harcouville* (this time, as he gave me in a low tone, he asked leave to present me with a card from Lord *h*—, who knew me rather slightly, and had once shown me, also, a trifling kindness).

This English name, I may mention, stood very high in the politi-

tical world, and was named as the most *probable* successor to the distinguished post of English minister at Paris.

I received it with a low bow, and read:

* MY DEAR BECKETT,

* I beg to introduce my very dear friend, the Marquis d'Harcouville, who will explain to you the nature of the services it may be in your power to render him and me.

He went on to speak of the Marquis as a man whose great wealth, whose intimate relations with the *Court*, and whose legitimate connections with the *House* rendered him the *most* eligible person for *times* friendly office, which, at the desire of his own sovereign, and of our government, he has so obligingly undertaken.

It added a great deal to my perplexity, when I read, further—

* By-the-bye, Walton was here yesterday, and told me that your seat is likely to be attacked—something, he says, is unquestionably going on at Donwell. You know there is an awkwardness in my meddling ever *so* seriously. But I advise, if it is not very obvious, your making Haxton look after it, and report immediately. I have it in serious. I ought to have mentioned that, for reasons that you will see, when you have talked with him for five minutes, the Marquis—with the concurrence of all our friends—drops his title, for a few weeks, and is at present plain Monsieur Drouville.

* I am this moment going to town, and can say no more.

* Yours faithfully,

* R—.

I was *extremely* puzzled. I could *scarcely* hear of Lord *h*—'s *succession*. I knew no one named



THE ROOM IN THE DRAGON'S WAKE

Drawn by J. A. Ferguson

might do at such a juncture what they never did before. Was it just possible that, for once, the Count and Countess would take their chairs at the table-d'hôte ?

CHAPTER IV.

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In this luxurious mood, I was accosted by a tall and very elegantly-made gentleman, who appeared to be about fifty. His air was courtly and graceful, and there was in his whole manner and appearance something so distinguished, that it was impossible not to suspect him of being a person of rank.

He had been standing upon the steps, looking out, like me, upon the moonlight effects that transformed, as it were, the objects and buildings in the little street. He accosted me, I say, with the politeness, at once easy and lofty, of a French nobleman of the old school. He asked me if I were not Mr. Beckett ? I assented ; and he immediately introduced himself as the Marquis d'Harmonville (this information he gave me in a low tone), and asked leave to present me with a letter from Lord R——, who knew my father slightly, and had once done me, also, a trifling kindness.

This English peer, I may mention, stood very high in the poli-

tical world, and was named as the most probable successor to the distinguished post of English minister at Paris.

I received it with a low bow, and read :

‘ MY DEAR BECKETT,

‘ I beg to introduce my very dear friend, the Marquis d'Harmonville, who will explain to you the nature of the services it may be in your power to render him and us.’

He went on to speak of the Marquis as a man whose great wealth, whose intimate relations with the old families, and whose legitimate influence with the court rendered him the fittest possible person for those friendly offices which, at the desire of his own sovereign, and of our government, he has so obligingly undertaken.

It added a great deal to my perplexity, when I read, further—

‘ By-the-bye, Walton was here yesterday, and told me that your seat is likely to be attacked ; something, he says, is unquestionably going on at Domwell. You know there is an awkwardness in my meddling ever so cautiously. But I advise, if it is not very officious, your making Haxton look after it, and report immediately. I fear it is serious. I ought to have mentioned that, for reasons that you will see, when you have talked with him for five minutes, the Marquis—with the concurrence of all our friends—drops his title, for a few weeks, and is at present plain Monsieur Droqville.

‘ I am this moment going to town, and can say no more.

‘ Yours faithfully,

‘ R——.’

I was utterly puzzled. I could scarcely boast of Lord ——'s acquaintance. I knew no one named

Haxton, and, except my hatter, no one called Walton ; and this peer wrote as if we were intimate friends ! I looked at the back of the letter, and the mystery was solved. And now, to my consternation—for I was plain Richard Beckett—I read—

‘ To George Stanhope Beckett, Esq., M.P.’

I looked with consternation in the face of the Marquis.

‘ What apology can I offer to Monsieur the Mar—to Monsieur Droqville ? It is true my name is Beckett—it is true I am known, though very slightly, to Lord R——; but the letter was not intended for me. My name is Richard Beckett—this is to Mr. Stanhope Beckett, the member for Shillingsworth. What can I say, or do, in this unfortunate situation ? I can only give you my honour as a gentleman, that, for me, the letter, which I now return, shall remain as unviolated a secret, as before I opened it. I am so shocked and grieved that such a mistake should have occurred !’

I dare say my honest vexation and good faith were pretty legibly written in my countenance ; for the look of gloomy embarrassment which had for a moment settled on the face of the Marquis, brightened ; he smiled, kindly, and extended his hand.

‘ I have not the least doubt that Monsieur Beckett will respect my little secret. As a mistake was destined to occur, I have reason to thank my good stars that it should have been with a gentleman of honour. Monsieur Beckett will permit me, I hope, to place his name among those of my friends ?’

I thanked the Marquis very much for his kind expressions. He went on to say—

‘ If, monsieur, I can persuade

you to visit me at Claironville, in Normandy, where I hope to see, on the 15th of August, a great many friends, whose acquaintance it might interest you to make, I shall be too happy.’

I thanked him, of course, very gratefully for his hospitality. He continued :

‘ I cannot, for the present, see my friends, for reasons which you may surmise, at my house in Paris. But monsieur will be so good as to let me know the hotel he means to stay at in Paris ; and he will find that although the Marquis d’Harmontville is not in town, that Monsieur Droqville will not lose sight of him.’

With many acknowledgments I gave him the information he desired.

‘ And in the meantime,’ he continued, ‘ if you think of any way in which Monsieur Droqville can be of use to you, our communication shall not be interrupted, and I shall so manage matters that you can easily let me know.’

I was very much flattered. The Marquis had, as we say, taken a fancy to me. Such likings at first sight often ripen into lasting friendships. To be sure it was just possible that the Marquis might think it prudent to keep the involuntary depository of a political secret, even so vague a one, in good humour.

Very graciously the Marquis took his leave, going up the stairs of the Belle Etoile.

I remained upon the steps, for a minute lost in speculation upon this new theme of interest. But the wonderful eyes, the thrilling voice, the exquisite figure of the beautiful lady who had taken possession of my imagination, quickly reasserted their influence. I was again gazing at the sympathetic moon, and descending the steps, I loitered along the pavements.

among strange objects, and houses that were antique and picturesque, in a dreamy state, thinking.

In a little while, I turned into the inn-yard again. There had come a lull. Instead of the noisy place it was, an hour or two before, the yard was perfectly still and empty, except for the carriages that stood here and there. Perhaps there was a servants' table-d'hôte just then. I was rather pleased to find solitude; and undisturbed I found out my lady-love's carriage, in the moonlight. I mused, I walked round it; I was as utterly foolish and maudlin as very young men, in my situation, usually are. The blinds were down, the doors, I suppose, locked. The brilliant moonlight revealed everything, and cast sharp, black shadows of wheel, and bar, and spring, on the pavement. I stood before the escutcheon painted on the door, which I had examined in the daylight. I wondered how often her eyes had rested on the same object. I pondered in a charming dream. A harsh, loud voice, over my shoulder, said suddenly,

'A red stork—good! The stork is a bird of prey; it is vigilant, greedy, and catches gudgeons. Red, too!—blood-red! Ha! ha! the symbol is appropriate.'

I had turned about, and beheld the palest face I ever saw. It was broad, ugly, and malignant. The figure was that of a French officer, in undress, and was six feet high. Across the nose and eyebrow there was a deep scar, which made the repulsive face grimmer.

The officer elevated his chin and his eyebrows, with a scoffing chuckle, and said,—'I have shot a stork, with a rifle bullet, when he thought himself safe in the clouds, for mere sport!' (He shrugged, and laughed malignantly.) 'See, monsieur; when a man like me—

a man of energy, you understand, a man with all his wits about him, a man who has made the tour of Europe under canvas, and, *parbleu!* often without it—resolves to discover a secret, expose a crime, catch a thief, spit a robber on the point of his sword, it is odd if he does not succeed. Ha! ha! ha! Adieu, monsieur!'

He turned with an angry whisk on his heel, and swaggered with long strides out of the gate.

CHAPTER V.

SUPPER AT THE BELLE ETOILE.

The French army were in a rather savage temper, just then. The English especially had but scant courtesy to expect at their hands. It was plain, however, that the cadaverous gentleman who had just apostrophized the heraldry of the Count's carriage, with such mysterious acrimony, had not intended any of his malevolence for me. He was stung by some old recollection, and had marched off, seething with fury.

I had received one of those unacknowledged shocks which startle us, when, fancying ourselves perfectly alone, we discover on a sudden, that our antics have been watched by a spectator, almost at our elbow. In this case, the effect was enhanced by the extreme repulsiveness of the face, and, I may add, its proximity, for, as I think, it almost touched mine. The enigmatical harangue of this person, so full of hatred and implied denunciation, was still in my ears. Hero at all events was new matter for the industrious fancy of a lover to work upon.

It was time now to go to the table-d'hôte. Who could tell what lights the gossip of the supper-table might throw upon the sub-

ject that interested me so powerfully!

I stepped into the room, my eyes searching the little assembly, about thirty people, for the persons who specially interested me.

It was not easy to induce people so hurried and overworked as those of the *Belle Etoile*, just now to send meals up to one's private apartments, in the midst of this unparalleled confusion; and therefore, many people who did not like it, might find themselves reduced to the alternative of supping at the *table-d'hôte*, or starving,

The Count was not there, nor his beautiful companion; but the Marquis d'Harmonville, whom I hardly expected to see in so public a place, signed, with a significant smile, to a vacant chair beside himself. I secured it, and he seemed pleased, and almost immediately entered into conversation with me.

'This is, probably, your first visit to France?' he said.

I told him it was, and he said:

'You must not think me very curious and impertinent; but Paris is about the most dangerous capital a high-spirited and generous young gentleman could visit without a Mentor. If you have not an experienced friend as a companion during your visit—'

He paused.

I told him I was not so provided, but that I had my wits about me; that I had seen a good deal of life in England, and that, I fancied, human nature was pretty much the same in all parts of the world. The Marquis shook his head, smiling.

'You will find very marked differences, notwithstanding,' he said. 'Peculiarities of intellect and peculiarities of character, undoubtedly, do pervade different nations; and this results, among the criminal classes, in a style of villainy no less peculiar. In

Paris, the class who live by their wits, is three or four times as great as in London; and they live much better; some of them even splendidly. They are more ingenious than the London rogues; they have more animation, and invention, and the dramatic faculty, in which your countrymen are deficient, is everywhere. These invaluable attributes place them upon a totally different level. They can affect the manners and enjoy the luxuries of people of distinction. They live, many of them, by play.'

'So do many of our London rogues.'

'Yes, but in a totally different way. They are the *habitueés* of certain gaming-tables, billiard-rooms, and other places, including your races, where high play goes on; and by superior knowledge of chances, by masking their play, by means of confederates, by means of bribery, and other artifices, varying with the subject of their imposture, they rob the unwary. But here it is more elaborately done, and with a really exquisite *fineness*. There are people whose manners, style, conversation, are unexceptionable, living in handsome houses in the best situations, with everything about them in the most refined taste, and exquisitely luxurious, who impose even upon the Parisian bourgeois, who believe them to be, in good faith, people of rank and fashion, because their habits are expensive and refined, and their houses are frequented by foreigners of distinction, and, to a degree, by foolish young Frenchmen of rank. At all these houses play goes on. The ostensible host and hostess seldom join in it; they provide it simply to plunder their guests, by means of their accomplices, and thus wealthy strangers are inveigled and robbed.'

'But I have heard of a young Englishman, a son of Lord Rooksbury, who broke two Parisian gaming-tables only last year.'

'I see,' he said, laughing, 'you are come here to do likewise. I, myself, at about your age, undertook the same spirited enterprise. I raised no less a sum than five hundred thousand francs to begin with; I expected to carry all before me by the simple expedient of going on doubling my stakes. I had heard of it, and I fancied that the sharpers, who kept the table, knew nothing of the matter. I found, however, that they not only knew all about it, but had provided against the possibility of any such experiments; and I was pulled up before I had well begun, by a rule which forbids the doubling of an original stake more than four times, consecutively.'

'And is that rule in force still?' I inquired, chap-fallen.

He laughed and shrugged. 'Of course it is, my young friend. People who live by an art, always understand it better than an amateur. I see you had formed the same plan, and no doubt came provided.'

I confessed I had prepared for conquest upon a still grander scale. I had arrived with a purse of thirty thousand pounds sterling.

'Any acquaintance of my very dear friend, Lord R——, interests me; and, besides my regard for him, I am charmed with you; so you will pardon all my, perhaps, too officious questions and advice.'

I thanked him most earnestly for his valuable counsel, and begged that he would have the goodness to give me all the advice in his power.

'Then if you take my advice,' said he, 'you will leave your money in the bank where it lies. Never risk a napoleon in a

gaming-house. The night I went to break the bank, I lost between seven and eight thousand pounds sterling of your English money: and my next adventure, I had obtained an introduction to one of those elegant gaming-houses which affect to be the private mansions of persons of distinction, and was saved from ruin by a gentleman, whom, ever since, I have regarded with increasing respect and friendship. It oddly happens he is in this house at this moment. I recognized his servant, and made him a visit in his apartments here, and found him the same brave, kind, honourable man I always knew him. But that he is living so entirely out of the world, now, I should have made a point of introducing you. Fifteen years ago he would have been the man of all others to consult. The gentleman I speak of is the Conte de St. Alyre. He represents a very old family. He is the very soul of honour, and the most sensible man in the world, except in one particular.'

'And that particular?' I hesitated. I was now deeply interested.

'Is that he has married a charming creature, at least five-and-forty years younger than himself, and is, of course, although I believe absolutely without cause, horribly jealous.'

'And the lady?'

'The Countess is, I believe, in every way worthy of so good a man,' he answered, a little drily.

'I think I heard her sing this evening.'

'Yes, I dare say; she is very accomplished.' After a few moments' silence he continued.

'I must not lose sight of you, for I should be sorry, when next you meet my friend Lord R——, that you had to tell him you had

been pigeoned in Paris. A rich Englishman as you are, with so large a sum at his Paris banker's, young, gay, generous, a thousand ghouls and harpies will be contending who shall be first to seize and devour you.'

At this moment I received something like a jerk from the elbow of the gentleman at my right. It was an accidental jog, as he turned in his seat.

'On the honour of a soldier, there is no man's flesh in this company heals so fast as mine.'

The tone in which this was spoken was harsh and stentorian, and almost made me bounce. I looked round and recognised the officer, whose large white face had half scared me in the inn-yard, wiping his mouth furiously, and then with a gulp of Maçon he went on—

'No one! It's not blood; it is ichor! it's miracle! Set aside stature, thew, bone, and muscle—set aside courage, and by all the angels of death, I'd fight a lion naked and dash his teeth down his jaws with my fist, and flog him to death with his own tail! Set aside, I say, all those attributes, which I am allowed to possess, and I am worth six men in any campaign, for that one quality of healing as I do—rip me up; punch me through, tear me to tatters with bomb-shells, and nature has me whole again, while your tailor would fine-draw an old coat. *Parbleu!* gentlemen, if you saw me naked, you would laugh? Look at my hand, a sabre-cut across the palm, to the bone, to save my head, taken up with three stitches, and five days after I was playing ball with an English general, a prisoner in Madrid, against the wall of the convent of the Santa Maria de la Castita! At Areola, by the great devil himself! that was an action.

Every man there, gentlemen, swallowed as much smoke in five minutes as would smother you all, in this room! I received, at the same moment, two musket balls in the thighs, a grape shot through the calf of my leg, a lance through my left shoulder, a piece of a shrapnel in the left deltoid, a bayonet through the cartilage of my right ribs, a sabre-cut that carried away a pound of flesh from my chest, and the better part of a congreve rocket on my forehead. Pretty well, ha, ha! and all while you'd say *bah!* and in eight days and a half I was making a forced march, without shoes, and only one gaiter, the life and soul of my company, and as sound as a roach!'

'Bravo! Bravissimo! Per Bacco! un gallant uomo!' exclaimed, in a martial ecstasy, a fat little Italian, who manufactured tooth-picks and wicker cradles on the island of Notre Dame; 'your exploits shall resound through Europe! and the history of those wars should be written in your blood!'

'Never mind! A trifle!' exclaimed the soldier. 'At Ligny, the other day, where we smashed the Prussians into ten hundred thousand milliards of atoms, a bit of a shell cut me across the leg and opened an artery. It was spouting as high as the chimney, and in half a minute I had lost enough to fill a pitcher. I must have expired in another minute, if I had not whipped off my sash like a flash of lightning, tied it round my leg above the wound, whipt a bayonet out of the back of a dead Prussian, and passing it under, made a tournequet of it with a couple of twists, and so stayed the hemorrhage, and saved my life. But, *sacré bleu!* gentlemen, I lost so much blood, I have been as pale as the bottom of a

plate ever since. No matter. A triflē. Blood well spent, gentlemen.' He applied himself now to his bottle of *vin ordinaire*.

The Marquis had closed his eyes, and looked resigned and disgusted, while all this was going on.

' *Garçon*,' said the officer, for the first time, speaking in a low tone over the back of his chair to the waiter; ' who came in that travelling carriage, dark yellow and black, that stands in the middle of the yard, with arms and supporters emblazoned on the door, and a red stork, as red as my facings ?'

The waiter could not say.

The eye of the eccentric officer, who had suddenly grown grim and serious, and seemed to have abandoned the general conversation to other people, lighted, as it were, accidentally, on me.

' Pardon me, monsieur,' he said. ' Did I not see you examining the panel of that carriage at the same time that I did so, this evening ? Can you tell me who arrived in it ?'

' I rather think the Count and Countess de St. Alyre.

' And are they here, in the *Belle Etoile* ?' he asked.

' They have got apartments upstairs,' I answered.

He started up, and half pushed his chair from the table. He quickly sat down again, and I could hear him *sacré-ing* and muttering to himself, and grinning and scowling. I could not tell whether he was alarmed or furious.

I turned to say a word or two to the Marquis, but he was gone. Several other people had dropped out also, and the supper party soon broke up.

Two or three substantial pieces of wood smouldered on the hearth, for the night had turned out chilly. I sat down by the fire in

a great arm-chair, of carved oak, with a marvellously high back, that looked as old as the days of Henry IV.

' *Garçon*,' said I, ' do you happen to know who that officer is ?'

' That is Colonel Gaillarde, monsieur.'

' Has he been often here ?'

' Once before, monsieur, for a week ; it is a year since.'

' He is the palest man I ever saw.'

' That is true, monsieur ; he has been taken often for a *revenant*.

' Can you give me a bottle of really good Burgundy ?'

' The best in France, monsieur.'

' Place it, and a glass, by my side, on this table, if you please. I may sit here for half an hour ?'

' Certainly, monsieur.'

I was very comfortable, the wine excellent, and my thoughts glowing and serene. ' Beautiful Countess ! Beautiful Countess ! shall we ever be better acquainted.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE NAKED SWORD.

A man who has been posting all day long, and changing the air he breathes every half hour, who is well pleased with himself, and has nothing on earth to trouble him, and who sits alone by a fire in a comfortable chair after having eaten a hearty supper, may be pardoned if he takes an accidental nap.

I had filled my fourth glass when I fell asleep. My head, I dare say, hung uncomfortably ; and it is admitted, that a variety of French dishes is not the most favourable precursor to pleasant dreams.

I had a dream as I took mine ease in mine inn on this occasion. I fancied myself in a huge cathe-

dral, without light, except from four tapers that stood at the corners of a raised platform hung with black, on which lay, draped also in black, what seemed to me the dead body of the Countess de St. Alyre. The place seemed empty, it was cold, and I could see only (in the halo of the candles) a little way round.

The little I saw bore the character of Gothic gloom, and helped my fancy to shape and furnish the black void that yawned all round me. I heard a sound like the slow tread of two persons walking up the flagged aisle. A faint echo told of the vastness of the place. An awful sense of expectation was upon me, and I was horribly frightened when the body that lay on the catafalque said (without stirring), in a whisper that froze me, 'They come to place me in the grave alive; save me.'

I found that I could neither speak nor move. I was horribly frightened.

The two people who approached now emerged from the darkness. One, the Count de St. Alyre glided to the head of the figure and placed his long thin hands under it. The white-faced Colonel, with the scar across his face, and a look of infernal triumph, placed his hands under her feet, and they began to raise her.

With an indescribable effort I broke the spell that bound me, and started to my feet with a gasp.

I was wide awake, but the broad, wicked face of Colonel Gailarde was staring, white as death, at me, from the other side of the hearth. 'Where is she?' I shuddered.

'That depends on who she is, monsieur,' replied the Colonel, curtly.

'Good heavens!' I gasped, looking about me.

The Colonel, who was eyeing me

sarcastically, had had his demitasse of *café noir*, and now drank his tasse, diffusing a pleasant perfume of brandy.

'I fell asleep and was dreaming, I said, lest any strong language, founded on the *rôle* he played in my dream, should have escaped me. I did not know for some moments where I was.

'You are the young gentleman who has the apartments over the Count and Countess de St. Alyre?' he said, winking one eye, close in meditation, and glaring at me with the other.

'I believe so—yes,' I answered.

'Well, younker, take care you have not worse dreams than that some night,' he said, enigmatically, and wagged his head with a chuckle. 'Worse dreams,' he repeated.

'What does monsieur the Colonel mean?' I inquired.

'I am trying to find that out myself,' said the Colonel; 'and I think I shall. When I get the first inch of the thread fast between my finger and thumb, it goes hard; but I follow it up, bit by bit, little by little, tracing it this way and that, and up and down, and round about, until the whole clue is wound up on my thumb, and the end, and its secret, fast in my fingers. Ingenious! Crafty as five foxes! wide awake as a weazel! *Parbleu!* if I had descended to that occupation I should have made my fortune as a spy. Good wine here?' he glanced interrogatively at my bottle.

'Very good,' said I. 'Will Monsieur the Colonel try a glass?'

He took the largest he could find, and filled it, raised it with a bow, and drank it slowly. 'Ah! ah! Bah! That is not it,' he exclaimed, with some disgust, filling it again. 'You ought to have told me to order your Bur-

gundy, and they would not have brought you that stuff.'

I got away from this man as soon as I civilly could, and, putting on my hat, I walked out with no other company than my sturdy walking stick. I visited the inn-yard, and looked up to the windows of the Countess's apartments. They were closed, however, and I had not even the unsubstantial consolation of contemplating the light in which that beautiful lady was at that moment writing, or reading, or sitting and thinking of—any one you please.

I bore this serious privation as well as I could, and took a little saunter through the town. I shan't bore you with moonlight effects, nor with the maunderings of a man who has fallen in love at first sight with a beautiful face. My ramble, it is enough to say, occupied about half-an-hour, and, returning by a slight *detour*, I found myself in a little square, with about two high gabled houses on each side, and a rude stone statue, worn by centuries of rain, on a pedestal in the centre of the pavement. Looking at this statue was a slight and rather tall man, whom I instantly recognized as the Marquis d'Harmonville: he knew me almost as quickly. He walked a step towards me, shrugged and laughed:

' You are surprised to find Monsieur Droqville staring at that old stone figure by moonlight. Anything to pass the time. You, I see, suffer from *ennui* as I do. These little provincial towns! Heavens! what an effort it is to live in them! If I could regret having formed in early life a friendship that does me honour, I think its condemning me to a sojourn in such a place would make me do so. You go on towards Paris, I suppose, in the morning?'

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' I have ordered horses.'

' As for me I await a letter, or an arrival, either would emancipate me; but I can't say how soon either event will happen.'

' Can I be of any use in this matter?' I began.

' None, monsieur, I thank you a thousand times. No, this is a piece in which every *rôle* is already cast. I am but an amateur, and, induced, solely by friendship to take a part.'

So he talked on, for a time, as we walked slowly toward the Belle Etoile, and then came a silence, which I broke by asking him if he knew anything of Colonel Gaillarde.

' Oh! yes, to be sure. He is a little mad; he has had some bad injuries of the head. He used to plague the people in the War Office to death. He has always some delusion. They contrived some employment for him—not regimental, of course—but in this campaign Napoleon, who could spare nobody, placed him in command of a regiment. He was always a desperate fighter, and such men were more than ever needed.'

There is, or was, a second inn, in this town, called l'Ecu de France. At its door the Marquis stopped, bade me a mysterious good-night, and disappeared.

As I walked slowly toward my inn, I met, in the shadow of a row of poplars, the garçon who had brought me my Burgundy a little time ago. I was thinking of Colonel Gaillarde, and I stopped the little waiter as he passed me.

' You said, I think, that Colonel Gaillarde was at the Belle Etoile for a week at one time.'

' Yes, monsieur.'

' Is he perfectly in his right mind?'

The waiter stared. ' Perfectly, monsieur.'

'Has he been suspected at any time of being out of his mind?'

'Never, monsieur; he is a little noisy, but a very shrewd man.'

'What is a fellow to think?' I muttered, as I walked on.

I was soon within sight of the lights of the Belle Etoile. A carriage, with four horses, stood in the moonlight at the door, and a furious altercation was going on in the hall, in which the yell of Colonel Gaillarde out-topped all other sounds.

Most young men like, at least, to witness a row. But, intuitively, I felt that this would interest me in a very special manner. I had only fifty yards to run, when I found myself in the hall of the old inn. The principal actor in this strange drama was, indeed, the Colonel, who stood facing the old Count de St. Alyre, who, in his travelling costume, with his black silk scarf covering the lower part of his face, confronted him; he had evidently been intercepted in an endeavour to reach his carriage. A little in the rear of the Count stood the Countess, also in travelling costume, with her thick black veil down, and holding in her delicate fingers a white rose. You can't conceive a more diabolical effigy of hate and fury than the Colonel; the knotted veins stood out on his forehead, his eyes were leaping from their sockets, he was grinding his teeth, and froth was on his lips. His sword was drawn, in his hand, and he accompanied his yelling

denunciations with stamps upon the floor and flourishes of his weapon in the air.

The host of the Belle Etoile was talking to the Colonel in soothing terms utterly thrown away. Two waiters, pale with fear, stared uselessly from behind. The Colonel screamed, and thundered, and whirled his sword. 'I was not sure of your red birds of prey; I could not believe you would have the audacity to travel on high roads, and to stop at honest inns, and lie under the same roof with honest men. You! *you!* both — vampires, wolves, ghouls. Summon the *gens d'armes*, I say. By St. Peter and all the devils, if either of you try to get out of that door I'll take your heads off.'

For a moment I had stood aghast. Here was a situation! I walked up to the lady; she laid her hand wildly upon my arm. 'Oh! monsieur,' she whispered, in great agitation, 'that dreadful madman! What are we to do? He won't let us pass; he will kill my husband.'

'Fear nothing, madame,' I answered with romantic devotion, and stepping between the Count and Gaillarde, as he shrieked his invective, 'Hold your tongue, and clear the way, you ruffian, you bully, you coward!' I roared.

A faint cry escaped the lady, which more than repaid the risk I ran, as the sword of the frantic soldier, after a moment's astonished pause, flashed in the air to cut me down.

(To be continued.)



Drawn by H. Johnson]

THE EVE OF ST. VALENTINE.

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THE EVE OF ST. VALENTINE.



LOVE LETTERS OF EMINENT PERSONS.

IN one of his celebrated essays, Lord Macaulay discusses the love letters of Sir William Temple. He says that he would very willingly exchange tons of State Papers for a very moderate amount of these love letters. The letters of William Temple to his Dorothy are certainly interesting enough and, at this time of the year especially, may be associated with wider and deeper sympathies than the Triple Alliance. Macaulay says that he would very much like to know what proofs of tenderness a young lady would be permitted to give her lover. We should for our own parts have thought that this was a dangerous and distracting subject for historical investigation, fraught with decided peril to the historic mind. The first idea is that the manners and customs of lovers do not greatly vary in any age. This, however, would perhaps be a mistake. In the dialogues of Erasmus the young lady refuses to give her betrothed a single kiss, classically observing, 'Ut me totam illibatamque tibi tradam.' In some shades of society caresses have been strictly inhibited, and it is interesting to see that Lord Macaulay had directed his powerful mind towards the elucidation of the subject. In the opinion of another great writer, with whom Macaulay's mind had much in sympathy, we mean Alexander Pope, love letters lie at the foundation of all literature. He describes how they 'speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul:—

'Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid—
Some banished lover, or some captive maid;
They live, they speak, they breathe
what love inspires,

Warm from the soul, and faithful to
its fires;
The virgin's wish, without her fears,
impart,
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the
heart.'

Most of us know by heart Mr. Tennyson's pretty poem about 'The Letters,' how 'she gave my letters back to me,' which the young lover refused to receive.

'She told me all her friends had said,
I raged against the public liar;
She spoke as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of fire.
I spoke with heat, and strength, and
force;
I shook her breast with vague
alarms—
Like torrents from a mountain's
source—
We rushed into each other's arms.'

Love letters always form part of the choicest machinery of the poet and the novelists. Pope's own letters, whether to Lady Mary Wortley Montague, or to Erina, or to Martha Blount, are probably love letters, and we shall watch with much interest their elucidation by Mr. Whitwell Elwin. One of our most popular lady novelists discusses with much force the great value of these letters, and how men who are unable by word of mouth to do themselves justice can nevertheless thoroughly reveal their whole nature in their love letters. This is probably very true. Many men get on much better in paper work than in a *viva voce* examination. At the same time it must be very puzzling to many young ladies of the present day to have highly intellectual letters from their lovers. They must be greatly puzzled when gentlemen of a speculative tone of mind, or some sucking young 'lion' of the press of the future, sets forth his whole

nature for Amanda or Amata. As a rule, the letters of any genius with a gift of utterance must cause decided wonderment to the *fiancée* who will probably mainly rely upon the endearing expressions at the beginning and end, or any wax kisses that may be discovered on the envelope. We have heard it suggested that young ladies in such difficulties had better apply for help to their brothers at college. That the subject of love may not lose its power over the minds of young men, I observe that the sapient authorities of the University of Cambridge have given as the subject of a gold medal this year,

‘Hominum Divumque voluptas
Alma Venus.’

The love letters of Eminent Persons are generally letters written before they became eminent. A great author will not confine his intellectual efforts to the penny post when a publisher will handsomely remunerate him for revealing them to the world. In the case of poets a large part of their effusions might, without much straining, be brought within the category of love letters. But then other ‘eminences’ mostly write their love letters before they achieve greatness or have greatness forced upon them. This is a great consolation for the lawyer that can get no briefs, the doctor that can get no practice, the young politician who cannot get a seat, and the young writer who has his articles rejected. They can take it out in their love letters. I am sorry for any eminent man who has to engage in this description of correspondence. According to the old joke the lawyer might tie up his letters with red tape, and the physician may make a muddle in his prescription. Love letters must take it out of a man and, in point of fact, love-making

requires an amount of time and concentration of purpose that can be ill-spared from professional pursuits. Eminence generally means effort, and a man in full work cannot afford time for such *ludibria luncæ*. They form the glorious privilege of leisure and of youth.

Among the more remarkable love letters is the celebrated volume of ‘Foster’s Essays.’ We believe that all these remarkable essays were originally love letters written to the lady to whom he was engaged. Mr. Macdonald makes one of his novels simply autobiographical; love-letters written by a man to vindicate his character in the eyes of the woman he loved. Literary men are not always so voluminous in this description of epistle. We once detected a very able reviewer in the weakness of writing a love letter. ‘I’ll not detain you long,’ he observed; ‘I never give the young woman more than a “short notice.”’ The young reviewer ought to have written his letters a year or two before; he had now too much work on hand. There is a glorious old poet, Thomson, the author of the ‘Seasons,’ who shows a sad gleam of romance in his verses to Amanda. He knew he was too poor to marry her—and she was soon to marry away from him—and so he frittered away his life sauntering about and lying a-bed. Yet for a poet he had wonderfully sensible ideas of matrimony. When his sister was engaged he wrote to her: ‘I must chiefly recommend to you to cultivate by every method that union of hearts, that agreement and sympathy of tempers, in which consists the true happiness of the marriage state. The economy and gentle management of a family is a woman’s natural province, and from that arises her best praise.’

Rousseau's saying was a true one—that to write a good love letter you ought to begin without knowing what you mean to say, and finish without knowing what you have written. This is certainly very much the way of love letters in general if we may judge them from the proceedings of the *Nisi Prius* courts. The love letters of men and women of genius, considered as compositions, are generally the best. As a rule, men of genius write much better letters than they receive. The man of genius generally exalts some woman into a divinity, and the creature of his imagination whom he marries turns out to be very human indeed. Hence the wives of literary men are not as a rule very interesting people. We have heard people laugh at Lady Scott because she said that she must get Sir Walter to write some more of his rubbish to get a new carpet. Yet his Charlotte sent more exquisite love letters to Sir Walter than any which the great novelist has produced in his novels. Was there ever a more graceful love letter than this about fixing the day? I quote it, as I owe some amends to the wives of literary men.

'If I could but really believe that my letter gave you only half the pleasure you express, I should almost think, my dearest Scott, that I should get very fond of writing merely for the pleasure to *indulge* you—that is saying a great deal. I hope you are sensible of the compliment I pay you; I don't expect I shall *always* be so pretty behaved. You may depend on me, my dearest friend, for fixing as *early* a day as I possibly can; and if it happens to be not quite so soon as you wish you must not be angry with me. It is very unlucky you are such a bad house-keeper, as I am no better. I shall

try. I hope to have very soon the pleasure of seeing you, and to tell you how much I love you; but I wish the first fortnight was over. With all my love, and those sort of pretty things, adieu!

'CHARLOTTE.

'P.S. *Etudes votre Français.*
Remember you are to teach me Italian in return, but I shall be but a stupid scholar. *Aimez Charlotte.*'

Let us take a glance at the love letters of some men eminent in the professions. And first of all of our divines. Chalmers says, in his Diary just before he was married, 'Dismissing all anticipations of heaven upon earth, may I betake myself soberly and determinedly to the duties of the married state.' We hope the good wife felt flattered by this expression of Christian resignation. He was very different to another Scotch divine of almost equal eminence, who, during his honeymoon, so far anticipated events as to date his letters from 'Heaven.' The love letters of Whitefield are curious. He said in them that if he knew himself he was quite free from the giddy passion which the world calls love. These eminent theologians were not at all unlike Racine. He married because his confessor recommended him to marry, and thought that, in this way, he would best overcome his unfortunate proclivity for making verses. 'When he was resolved to marry,' says his son, 'neither love nor interest had anything to do with his choice; and in so serious an affair he consulted reason only.' His wife did not know the difference between poetry and prose, and never read a line of her husband's tragedies, except, perhaps, the titles. One of the briefest of theological love stories relates to

the marriage of Robert Hall. He made up his mind that he would marry his servant. So he went into the kitchen and said, 'Betty, do you love the Lord?' 'Yes, sir,' said Betty. 'Betty, do you love me?' he next asked. 'I hope so, master,' she answered, and they were happily married.

The lawyers are people, who, as a class, seemed to have turned out very well in their love affairs. We should like to have seen the letters which Jack Scott wrote to Miss Surtees, or which that famous jurist, Judge Buller, wrote to the lassie whom he married when he was only eighteen. When Charles Yorke, afterwards Chancellor Hardwick, asked a Worcestershire squire for the hand of his daughter, the old gentleman politely asked him about his rent-roll. The young lawyer replied that his estate consisted of 'a perch of ground in Westminster Hall.' Similarly, when Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Chief Justice Tenterden, was asked by a Kentish squire about his estates, the young pleader showed him his books in one room and his pupils in another. Both Lady Scott and Lady Tenterden were esteemed rather narrow in their housekeeping. After all, the best kind of love letter is that which a man writes to his wife, and there is at least one very sweet love letter which Abbott wrote to his wife while on circuit with a lot of poetry in it. We have one excellent example—a love letter, which Macaulay would probably accept as an historical document, written by that noble character the first Lord Cowper to his sweetheart when a young Templar. It is in statelier phrase than the present familiar style beginning 'dearest madam,' and ending 'your very humble and affectionate servant.' He tells her, 'I wish

my thoughts that are so often with you when I am not, were not invisible; then you might save yourself the trouble of reading such like notes, and see at one view how discontented and vexed they are when I cannot wait on you. You would see how forward and impatient they grow under any other business, and I'm sure, without further apology, would excuse me and forgive my absence for their very looks.' This is certainly very prettily expressed by the young Templar. This is the Chancellor of whom Voltaire used absurdly to say that he defended and practised polygamy. Cowper's letters to his wife, and the journals he kept for her, show him to have been a most excellent husband. So far as we are acquainted with legal biography, it must be said that marriage generally answers very well for the lawyers. They seem to become keenly alive to their responsibilities, and settle down steadily to their business.

The men of science do not appear, on the whole, to have been equally happy. We should like to have seen Comte's letters to his Clotilde, but, as a rule, it is ill for a man of science to fall in love with a woman of science. Sir Humphrey Davy tells his mother, 'I am the happiest of men in the hope of a union with a woman equally distinguished for virtues, talents, and accomplishments.' He joyously tells his brother, 'Mrs. Appreece has consented to marry me, and when the event takes place, I shall not envy kings, princes, or potentates.' Sir Henry Holland describes the sensation which Mrs. Appreece made in Edinburgh societies, when even a regius professor went down on his knees in the street to fasten her shoe. Nevertheless, the marriage turned out to be altogether unsuitable and unfortunate. Count

Rumford, a philosopher, if ever there was one, married Madame Lavoisier, a philosopher herself, and a widow of a philosopher. Almost the first passage in a youthful note book, was, 'Love is a noble passion of the mind.' He was four years in courting the clever Frenchwoman. We do not know what he wrote to her before marriage, but this is the way in which he wrote *about* her afterwards. 'I have the misfortune to be married to one of the most imperious, tyrannical, unfeeling women that ever existed, and whose perseverance in pursuing an object is equal to her profound cunning and wickedness in framing it.' He explains one of his troubles. 'She goes and pours boiling water on some of my beautiful flowers,' which, we admit, was, at least, eccentric conduct on the part of the lady. Yet two very eminent living men, M. Guizot and Sir Henry Holland, knew her, and indeed speak very kindly of her memory. M. Guizot's own marriage was under sufficiently remarkable circumstances. He gained his wife's heart by writing anonymous articles in a periodical for her when she was laid up, and these litter of papers might be regarded as a novel species of love letters.

We have no love letters of Pascal's, but we strongly think the author of '*Provincial Letters*' must have written the best love letters of all. But it is interesting to find that this incomparable logician and philosopher had given the subject his most serious consideration. M. Victor Cousard discovered among the MSS. of the Abbey of St. Germain de Prés, a manuscript of Pascal's called '*A Discourse on the Passions of Love*.' The work leaves no doubt that Pascal was very much in love, and his biographers have spun a very

lively romance out of the discovery of this manuscript. But unless it was the sister of his friend, the Duc de Rohan, whose story is the most tragic of all the stories of Port Royal, conjecture must otherwise be silent. Pascal has just one remark which looks autobiographical: 'When one loves a lady of unequal rank, ambition may accompany the beginning of love; but in a little while the latter becomes the master. He is a tyrant who endures no compassion; he will be alone; all the passions must bend and obey him. . . . Man by himself is an imperfect thing; to be happy he needs to find a second. He often searches for this in a condition of life equal to his own, because the liberty and opportunity of declaring himself are there most easily to be met with. Nevertheless, we sometimes look far above ourselves and feel the fire increase, although we dare not confess it to her who is its cause a high friendship fills the heart of man much more completely than a common or equal one.' So Pascal seems to have felt

'The desire of the moth to the star,
Of the day to the morrow;
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow.'

It is something not uncommon in the history of eminent men. An Addison woos a countess for fifteen years and then discovers that she was not worth the wooing. It is to be wished that we knew more of the love affairs of our great men. The knowledge would explain the lives, and would explain history to a greater extent than even Lord Macaulay could conceive possible. Now and then we obtain the glimpses of love letters, but, as a rule, we seldom obtain access to those deeper founts of feeling and far-concealed springs of action.



THE MINSTREL'S THEME.

WERE I the fairest little flower
 That e'er in garden grew ;
 I'd glow with pride 'neath sun and shower
 Did I but bloom for you !

Were I the sweetest bird that sings
 Upon the blossom'd tree ;
 I'd come from far on weary wings,
 And warble, aye, to thee !

Were I the gentlest, fragrant breeze
 That fills the Summer air ;
 I'd come across the golden seas,
 And linger round thy hair !

Alas ! I'm but a minstrel boy,
 Who sings his life away,
 With not a note of hope or joy
 In his sad roundelay !

Oh ! quicken thou my wasted strains
 With thy dark, glancing eye ;
 Or bid me seek far distant plains
 To sing and fight and die !

A. LAMONT.

ONE WINTER NIGHT.

First Narrative.

THE wind blew keenly from the north, and cut like frozen knives. Out in the darkening street my horse and gig stood waiting, and the December twilight gathered.

'Why, bless me, Annie, I might be going to Japan,' I exclaimed, buttoning my great coat hastily; not caring to show how unwilling I was to lose the warm touch of my young wife's loving hands. 'Be quick, dear, and hand me over the case of watches from the hall-table there.'

'I wish you weren't going alone with these in your pocket, George,' she said, looking from the compact Geneva box in her hand up to my face; 'it is worth more than sixty pounds, and I'm sure it isn't safe for you to carry it.'

'Who's to know I carry it?' I laughed, as I packed it into the long inner pocket of my overcoat. 'Besides, it will be worth less when I bring it back, so the danger will be less. Cheer up.'

'Oh, George! it's nearly dark already,' broke in Annie, piteously, as she shudderingly turned in from the open doorway. 'People oughtn't to hold clubs on Christmas Eve. I'm sure after attending to business all the week you ought to be left to rest and enjoy yourself on Saturday evening. And I'm doubly sure that after attending to it all the year you ought to be left to enjoy your Christmas Eve.'

'I shall enjoy it, dear,' I said, as cheerfully as if the words were not an egregious falsehood. 'I shall enjoy my drive, and my hot supper at the Miners' Arms, and one or two other things. If it had been an engagement for this one night

only I might have begged off; but you see, dear, it is the beginning of a year's engagement which I should not like to lose. Indeed it may go on for years, and we are not rich enough *quite* yet to care to refuse a good prospect. Eh, love?'

'I don't know anything about it, except its disadvantages,' fretted Annie.

'I will explain once more, dear,' I answered, knowing she would like the few minutes' delay, 'though I believe it is the hundred and fiftieth time I've done so. Twelve of the men at the Bog-mines have formed a club, which is to meet, on the night of every fourth Saturday, at a little public-house called the Miners' Arms. Here I am to join them with a good choice of silver watches on approval. They each pay in to me ten shillings, then draw lots, and the winner has a watch of the value of the six pounds. There will be one winner every night, and one watch sold, so at the end of the year each member will have a watch. They all go on paying through the year, but those who draw the lots of course get one less in number every month. Any one can have a watch of higher value than the six pounds by paying extra, so I take some with me that are more expensive. I hope you see the advantages now, dear, as well as the disadvantages, and will make the best of it, even on a bitter December night.'

'George—but George,' whined Annie, as dismal after my satisfactory explanation as she had been before, 'think of my having to spend Christmas Eve here all alone.'

'Only a few hours, after all. I shall be home at midnight to let you in the Christmas, never fear.'

'I don't believe you will, George. They will keep you, or it will snow, or something; and it is a long fifteen miles' drive each way. You can't be *sure* to be at home.'

'I can, and will, dear. Why, how down-hearted you are: I don't think I ever saw you so before.'

'I shall be so dreary and lonely and sad all night, George.'

'No, you won't, love, because I shall be home by twelve to let in the Christmas. There, that's a promise, and you know whether I've ever broken a promise to you. Now let me go. The shop is to be shut early that the men may enjoy their Christmas beef and pudding and songs. But I hope they will have dispersed before I come home at midnight.'

'Quite sure you'll be home then?' pleaded Annie, still detaining me.

'Quite sure, my anxious little darling. What troubles you this evening? Are you afraid of that funereal-looking quadruped outside running away with me, or of a dead and gone Duval running away with my property?'

'And you promise to come and let in the Christmas for us, George?'

'I promise, yes. Now good-bye in reality.'

I took my seat in the gig, and drove off rapidly to make up for lost time, kissing my hand to Annie as she stood in the lighted doorway watching me off. Down the gaily-lighted High Street, through the busy, slatternly suburbs, then out into the wide, chill country. It was an ugly drive from the town to the Bog-mines, even on the brightest day of summer; but no words can describe its bleak and bitter cheerlessness, or its utter solitariness, on this December evening. Now and then, certainly, a cottage did skirt the road,

and when five of the fifteen miles were travelled I passed through a small and scattered village. Beyond this the turnpike road led me straight on through the flat and boggy country. Quite the most isolated dwelling I saw was a little cottage across a field, about six miles from town, which I knew to be the home of a lame old Roman Catholic priest, who lived there with a bedridden brother. A good old man, always ready to help the sick and sorrowful. I had never seen him, but I knew him well by report; and had more than once had my attention called to the little house—neat and well managed—where the two old brothers lived alone. After I had passed that, there seemed to be no human habitation for miles; and as far as I could see it—which certainly was not far—the prospect was gloomy enough; a wide, flat expanse of country intersected by dim hedge-rows, and broken by the spectral outlines of the bare winter trees. I drove on as fast as I could, while the evening darkened into night; and the wind drove past me threatening snow. I began now for the first time to wish that the inauguration of the club had not been arranged for to-night; and to wish more earnestly still—what I had often and often wished before—that I had for company one of the dogs that used to be the friends and companions of my boyhood; ever ready at my beck and call; eager and glad to follow me anywhere; repaying my fondness for them by their faithfulness and devotion to myself. Above all, I wished for the intelligent old mastiff which had left the farm and lived with me in town until two years ago; who would have been with me now, but that Annie did not like him, and so when I married I

gave him away. I never told her what a struggle it had been to me to part with him; because, after all, what was his loss to me in comparison with the companion I had gained? Afterwards—when I felt at times how pleasant it would be to me to have one of my favourites about my house—I would broach the subject to my wife; but, seeing it was distasteful to her, I never urged it. Now—as often at such times—I could not help recalling longingly my old dog's attachment to me; his pleasant companionship; his protecting watchfulness; his strong and steadfast affection, which I had won simply by having rescued him from a trap when he was a puppy, and nursed and cured his broken leg. Yes, I would give much to have him with me now. Yet, how could I fret for this when I could gratefully think and dream of the little one who would soon have its place at our loving, cheerful hearth? And then, of course, I fell again to picturing the dear young face that had watched me from the open doorway, pale and wistful in the gaslight. What a merry night we ought to have been making of it—Annie and I—dropping now and then into our favourite occupation of adding story after story to that Spanish castle founded on our retirement from business with a princely competence. It was rather early, perhaps, to make arrangements for the event, but it was just as well to be in good time. And when you *are* looking on into the future—vague to the best of eyes—isn't it just as easy to see things rose-coloured as blue? In these pleasant dreams I drove on until the mines were round me, and I drew up my horse before the low public-house where I was to meet the club. All the mem-

bers had assembled in a long, well-lighted room, with a sanded floor and an immense fire roaring in the chimney. While I stood before it, restoring life to my petrified feet and fingers, I looked round at the dozen men who had their places at the table, and I voted them a set of kindly, noisy fellows. But as the evening wore on I modified my opinion. One or two were sullen and moody, thwarting every amendment, and drinking a great deal in a kind of gruff and greedy silence. One or two were boisterous and contradictory, dropping ready oaths continually from their lips, and bringing down their fists heavily upon the deal table to enforce their rough and noisy words. And others were quiet, orderly men, with very few words to say, and a very deliberate way of saying them. But, among them all, I noticed one most particularly; far above his companions in cordiality and kindness; quite the most pleasant, the most genial, and the most intelligent man there. He behaved to me, too, with a certain quiet respect which most of the others dispensed with, and which is rare indeed among the Bog-mines. How could I help being glad when this man drew the lucky lot, and won as beautiful an English lever as one need wish to see? But, with a hearty cordiality, the man offered to have the lots drawn again; he could wait, he said, and some of his mates had set their hearts on it. I negatived this proposal at once, objecting strongly to it on principle, and the watch went slowly the round of the table for admiration, while its owner took this opportunity of going out into the yard to tell the ostler—who was a friend of his—that he had won it. I did not wonder at this at the time, but afterwards

I understood it. I put up the eleven remaining watches, and packed and tied the box. After enjoying the hot supper—at which I was a heartily-welcomed guest—and the steaming punch which followed it, I drew on my overcoat again, and buttoned it snugly and safely across my chest, with the box in its long inner pocket. Just then the ostler came in to me with a puzzled face. My horse was lame, he told me; 'dead lame, and would not stir.'

'Lame! What on earth——?'

But my exclamation of incredulity and astonishment were only met by the stolid assurance that the horse *was* lame, and it would be as much as his life was worth for me to take him out to-night. I simply could not and would not believe it, and hastened to the stable; most, if not all, of the company following me. Well, there the horse lay, 'dead lame,' as the ostler had said. There was no chance of *his* taking me home that night, at any rate. I had not lived through all my boyhood at a farm without understanding a little about horses, and I felt certain that there had been foul play here. I could have sworn that a pick had been run into the flesh under the knee, and I knew that the animal was useless indeed now. I could not prove the deed, of course, but I felt almost as confident of it then as I did four hours afterwards, when I could feel certain *who* had done it.

'You'll have to stay here till morning, sir,' the landlord said. 'We'll make you as comfortable as possible.'

'Impossible,' I answered, thinking a hundred thoughts at once.

'But isn't it a case of necessity, sir? There's no other conveyance in the place.'

'No horse!' I exclaimed, knowing I could not for a moment

entertain the proposal of staying.

'None at all, except my own pony, sir. I couldn't possibly let you have him, because he's got to carry me twenty miles, as soon as it's daylight, to spend Christmas day with my old father.'

'Have none of you a horse here?' I asked, appealing, in desperation, to the miners. 'I will pay you anything you like to ask me for the use of one to-night.'

No; no one had a horse at my disposal, or at his own either; and they could but join in mine host's persuasions to me to sleep at the Miners' Arms. 'Even if the horse is incapable in the morning, sir,' they said, 'and you've still to walk, it'll be better in the daylight than now in the dark. There'll be plenty of snow directly, and it's likely to be a frightful night.'

Not for one moment, though, did I hesitate when I thought of Annie; of the anxious night she would spend waiting for and vainly expecting me; of the dreary dawning of the Christmas morning for her if I did not keep my promise. True, I could not be home at midnight to let in the Christmas for her as I had promised; but the delay was not my own fault, and at least I might let it in for her at dawn, and prevent it breaking sadly and drearily for my wife. I never yet had shrunk from a fifteen miles' walk, even in the dark; so I said good-night to the miners with a laugh, which was intended to prevent their laughing at what they evidently thought a Quixotic intention, and started briskly, while they called a 'Good-night, sir,' cheerily after me.

On and on I went, thinking busily, as one naturally does on a long solitary walk. But presently the snow began to fall;

and, though it was but slight at first, the quiet, pleasant thoughts were soon dispersed; and so I sang aloud for company, shouting lustily to keep myself warm as well as cheerful. And, when I was tired of that, I whistled old familiar airs, and improvised eccentric variations. Anything to shorten the long, long stretch of whitening highway; anything to deaden the cutting, piercing blast of the night wind.

I should think I had gone a couple of miles when I heard footsteps on the road behind me. My first impulse was to turn and wait for the society of any traveller who might be journeying on my way; but my second was to quicken my steps with a nameless fear. This impulse I followed resolutely yet blindly; but as I hastened on, the steps behind me hastened too.

No house or human being was there within sight or carshot. I had valuable property about me, and not even a stick in my hand. I saw what a random fool I had been in starting at all from the Miners' Arms to-night. I saw it all, with a flash of pain and despair, as the steps behind steadily gained upon me. I hurried on, trying to believe I only did so because of my promise to Annie; but I knew it was really fear which quickened my breath and my footsteps, though fear was not a usual sensation with me. The tread behind quickened as mine quickened; and presently two men overtook me, one joining me on either side. Their faces were covered with black crape, and each carried a stout stick in his hand. When the first accosted me with a slow impertinence, I recognised the voice of that member of the club who had most of all exerted himself to entertain me at the Miners' Arms, and who

had offered to give up his lot when he became the lucky winner of the watch. My ear is quick to recognise voices, rarely deceiving me, and the voice of this man was peculiar. Before his insolent speech was ended, the second man broke in, and I felt I could detect the voice of the ostler who had told me of the lameness of my horse.

'Come, shut up!' he said. 'What's the use of talking to him? He's only got to hand over the watches; we want nothing more of him.'

'That's it,' said the first man, readily. 'You see what we want,' he added, addressing me threateningly; 'so be quick about it.'

I saw one thing plainly enough. It would be of no use for me to feign ignorance of what they meant, so I simply asked them what they were going to do with the watches. A stupid question enough; but I caught at any delay, as I walked on, unprotected, between the two strong, roughly-clad miners, with their masked faces and their stout sticks.

'It's no use for you to quibble over what we say,' the first man put in, quickly; 'it only wastes time, and we don't care to spend much in this climate. You've nothing to do but pass us over those watches you brought from the public, and your own watch and chain; we happen to know they're worth having. Come, do it at once, or it'll be the worse for you.'

'I wonder whether you understand that the descriptions and numbers are all taken?' I said, as easily as I could, just still for the purpose of gaining time; 'and I wonder whether you understand that the police will be at once on the track of the thieves? You'll wish the watches anywhere then but on your persons, I'm thinking.'

I believe I said it as coolly as

any one could, under the circumstances; but I could see that the men were little impressed by the import of my words.

'We'll settle all that between ourselves,' the ostler said, with a grating chuckle; 'and as you don't seem inclined to hand that there box over peaceably, we'll just help ourselves. Go ahead, mate.'

'Come, look here, you fellows,' I began, with a sudden attempt at cool defiance, 'I know you both well enough, and can swear to you before any judge in England. Don't you think it would be your wisest plan to go off before you've seven years' transportation to look forward to?'

'Leave those little personal affairs for us to settle,' sneered the miner; 'we'll look after ourselves when we leave you to-night. Come, look sharp, that we ain't tempted to make your swearing to us rather harder than you could wish. Don't ye see that we're two of us, each with twice your strength, and there's no help within a couple of miles.'

'Now then, mate, stop this ridiculous dawdling,' put in the other man, sullenly. 'I won't wait a minute longer dawdling here in the cold. As he won't hand the things out without any fuss, we'll do it all for him, and do it sharp. Tie up his mouth with the handkercher, and pass me the cord.'

My mouth was gagged in an instant, as it seemed to me; and, while I fought frantically at the ruffians, they seized my wrists, and bound them round and round with thin cord, piercing the flesh until the blood came.

'I've got 'em safe enough, and I'll tie 'em so,' muttered one fellow, with a jeering laugh, while the other had his great ugly hands tight on the breast of my coat. 'Hold hard one moment.'

Just as the man spoke, and tied the first link in the cord, there came towards us slowly, from the hedge on our right, a great black mastiff, his shaggy head raised, and his sharp grey eyes shining in the dim, weird gloom of the snowy night. He hesitated a moment before he reached us; then, with the shrill bark with which a mastiff generally prepares himself for an attack, he rushed upon the fellow who was holding me, seized him by the throat, and throwing him down upon his back, stood with his forepaws on his neck and chest. Shall I ever forget the man's abject, craven fear, as the dog's fierce eyes met his so closely; as the dog's white fangs gleamed between his drawn lips, and his angry, panting breath rose and fell upon the man's own ghastly cheek?

'Call your bloodhound off,' cried the other man, drawing back from me in terror.

Of course I saw it was best that they should think, as they naturally would, that the dog was mine; so I answered, with a light, satirical laugh, 'You don't know much of mastiffs if you think that such a one as that would let his master be waylaid. With a word, I can have you sprawling there beside your rascally companion.'

I spoke it confidently enough, feeling that both my life and property were safe; but I could not help hoping he would not force me to prove my words.

'Call him off,' he cried again, shivering as he looked at the dog, who—evidently and unmistakably ready to spring to the assault in a moment, as only a mastiff can—watched every movement of one man, while he held the other, his great shaggy-haired chest heaving quickly.

'You'd be safer, you and your cursed accomplice, if you were ten

miles away now,' I said, almost jauntily.

'Now then, sir, take him off,' the man answered, suddenly affecting a jocund innocence. 'We were only frightening you, to test your pluck. I wonder you didn't understand that from the first. Take your dog on, please, and let us get back; we've been long enough over a joke.'

Seeing that the man's fear was most thorough and unfeigned, I looked the dog steadily and kindly in the face, and whistled. I knew that it was such a whistle as my own dogs used to understand and answer to in the old days; but I was not without a sickening fear that the animal, knowing me a stranger, would ignore my call, and so perhaps make his rescue of no effect. Slowly he shook his great black head and shaggy breast, raised his forefeet deliberately one at a time, and turned to join me. The man on whom he had been standing still lay prostrate in the snow, too much terrified to attempt to rise while the animal was near.

'Good dog!' Noble fellow! I whispered, in the low, caressing tone which I knew that dogs were keen to understand, and quick to appreciate. He looked up into my face with as much of an answer in his eyes as I had ever seen in my old favourite's, and then walked on beside me, so close beside me that I could feel his soft hair touch my hand. Silently and watchfully he walked, his step utterly noiseless on the fast-deepening snow.

Fast-deepening, indeed! Every moment it fell thicker and thicker. Each moment it lay deeper and deeper under my tired feet—for I was tired already, as I never remembered to have been before after only a three-miles' walk. Only three miles even yet, and twelve to come. I threw away the match

I had lighted to enable me to read the figures on the milestone, and started again on my toilsome way, dazzled almost by the white expanse of deepening snow, and wishing with all my heart that I had been an habitual smoker, and had a pipe with me now. Before I had gone another mile, the aspect of the weather had completely changed. A fierce gale set in from the south-east, driving clouds of snow before it; and through this I fought on, until it seemed to me I must have been battling so a whole night. Yet, probably, it was not more than an hour, and I had made no progress worth speaking of, though little strength seemed left to me. I could not look up now, as I pressed on against a wind that literally seemed to scream as it passed me, and drifted the snow in heaps against the gates and hedges. Did I ever remember such a sudden, blinding snow-storm as this in my life before? Never. I plunged my hands deep into my pockets to warm them; but, even in their thick driving-gloves, they were benumbed and helpless. My strength and spirit were failing. Nine or ten miles to walk even yet before home was reached; and it seemed as if I could not make any way, fighting on in the teeth of the furious wind. I felt that long before those nine or ten miles were travelled, the road would be impassable, and my strength exhausted. Faster and thicker the snow fell now, and weaker grew my efforts, as I struggled on through it, the strong wind drifting it so that at times I stumbled up to my knees; and the gale rose, and the snow fell faster every minute. Another hour's painful effort. The glaring white lay all around me, unbroken by a single track, and my sight was growing dim and confused; still I fought

on against the killing blast of the gale. Now and then it blew me completely down; but I always could regain my footing, and always the dog waited for me.

'Little use, I fear, old fellow,' I said, thankful to hear the sound of my own voice, and resting my hand on his soft, warm head; 'it is only to give it all up a little further on. Good, helpful fellow.'

On and on, and still no house in all the wide expanse. My pace had slackened to a crawl, and all hope of reaching home was gradually dying within me. I knew well what fate awaited me unless I could reach a human habitation soon. I knew that the fatal temptation to sleep was creeping over me, and I feared I had not strength to battle with it and save my life. Only a little further, and my perished limbs would have done all that they could do.

Starved, benumbed, and sleepy, I struggled on in the teeth of the storm, my eyes blinded, my steps clogged, and always growing upon me that irresistible longing to sleep, against which I fought with every power of mind and body. Sometimes I fancied I heard wheels rapidly overtaking me, and I would stop in sudden hope; but a moment served to show me it was only the peculiar effect of the wind, and that no wheels could have been heard, even if they could have travelled, on the deep snow. My hands were now dead to all feeling; I could not distinguish what I touched when I laid my fingers on the dog beside me. My sight, too, was surely going. I saw the faithful mastiff only as a dim blot upon the dazzling white. I began to fancy that, though I could see no house in all the wide expanse of glaring snow, there might be one even close to me, which I should pass unknowingly; and then a great babyish longing came

over me to cry—to cry, with the icicles thick upon my eyes!

And now all my strength was exhausted, and without knowing at all how far I still was from home, I knew that the end of my walk was come. Under some sheltering bank, perhaps, where the snow was deep and soft, I would rest. I was worn out, and *must* sleep; the desire was irresistible and overwhelming.

Somebody was waiting at home for me—I knew that, vaguely and dreamily—at home—a long way off. "I'll go presently—when I've rested. Good dog! Good, faithful fellow! You want rest, too." Beside a roadside gate, half-buried in the snow, I fell. I felt all the pain and anxiety going from me, as I lay helpless and motionless in the snow; and I yielded at once to the fatal temptation to sleep, which I had resisted as long as I had power to do so. The dog, which had until that moment kept close beside me, ran at the gate and leaped it, while I watched him sleepily, sorry he should leave me, yet powerless to entice him back. There was a low, distant singing in my ears, growing more and more confused. My eyes were closed and the snow-flakes covering them, when, with an eager bark, the dog put his head through the bars of the wide gate (scattering, as he did so, the snow that lay deep on them), and pulled at my coat, shaking it hastily and impatiently. I was only dreamily conscious of his motive; and it was more to avoid the worrying than to obey him, that I rose with one last effort, climbed the gate, and tottered on beside my guide. And now I seemed to crawl through, as well as over, the snow that had drifted here deeper than out in the highway; and for the last time I battled fiercely and determinately with

the lethargy which held me. Was my faithful dumb guide leading me to human help? I prayed aloud as I stumbled on, that it might be so—prayed while I could feel that the power was still mine, knowing it would soon desert me; but I fancy there was little sound from my stiff lips.

‘Is help near, good dog, strong, faithful fellow? No; all white and desolate. White fields—with just faint signs—of where—the hedge-rows run. What a wide—solitary—place—to die. Good dog! Brave friend!—leading me to—help—and—and—rescue.—How it all swims and trembles—the—great—wide—white—’

* * * * *

Second Narrative.

My poor brother is sleeping like an infant. There lingers not, in this sleep, even a shadow of suffering on the dear, worn face. I kneel beside him, keeping my Christmas Vigil. Midnight has passed four hours; but I cannot weary of my prayers to-night, feeling so grateful for my brother's ease, feeling so deeply in my own calm heart the peace and promise of the Christmas morning. I can hear no longer the crying of the night wind, as it drives the snow before it against my windows. The fury of the storm has worn itself out. Through all my eighty years I cannot remember such a sudden and terrific gale before. I wonder how long this comparative calm will last. Hark! It is broken already by a strange sound without, a sound I cannot understand. Is it the quick, eager bark of a dog? No; it is a human cry for help. No; what is it? I open the window for a moment, and distinguish only a faint rubbing or scraping against the cottage door. Something, surely, is

wanted; some help, perhaps, which Our Lady, in her infinite pity, will allow me to give in her name.

I close our bedroom-door softly, and pass down the narrow stairs as quickly as I can in my lameness and my feeble old age. Without waiting for a light, I open the outer door, and there, in the light which the snow gives, I see a man lying alone and dead upon the threshold. Dead, I think in my first glance; but when I raise him with care and tenderness—a sob of pain rushing up from my heart at sight of him—and take him into the fireless, cheerless kitchen, he opens his eyes and gazes round him in vacant bewilderment.

‘Stop!’ he says, in a broken, eager whisper. ‘Where's the dog?’

I had looked round searchingly while the door was open, wondering whether the man lying there in the snow had been alone, and so I knew there had been no dog with him. I see that his mind is wandering, so I only tell him, soothingly, that the dog is all right.

‘Let him in,’ he says, moving back to the door with a piteous smile. ‘Is he your dog? He has been very good to me.’

I turn aside the question. I cannot tell him we have no dog, nor that there is no other house near here, for it would betray the alienation of his mind. I open the door just to satisfy him, and he, still supported by my arm, looks with me out into the silence. We can see distinctly all over the white field that surrounds my cottage, but no dog is there. I close the door hastily, just as my visitor loses all power and consciousness. Old as I am, I can carry him up the stairs. He is but a slight young fellow, with a delicate, handsome face, which has a certain courage about it, but is pale with a ghastly pallor. I have seen many men rescued after being lost in the snow; but it seems

to me that I have never seen one so near death as this.

His clothes are frozen; his fingers are stiff and shrunken, with no sensation in them at all, and his eyes are fearfully bloodshot. I carry him to our room, and undress him; then I take my brother—wide awake now, and troubled that he cannot help me—out of bed, and lay the poor unconscious gentleman in his warm place. There is but slight chance of my being able to save his life; but that chance must be tried to the uttermost. I take my brother down in a blanket to the old couch on the kitchen hearth; then I pile dry sticks in the grate, and soon have a cheerful, crackling fire to help me, and to comfort him. Then I go upstairs again to my invalid, and, taking one hand or foot at a time out of the bed, I chafe it with the snow I have brought in a bowl. As soon as the fire is ready, and I have prepared it, I dose him, still unconscious, with a cup of hot mint tea.

He has been in bed almost an hour when he wakes to consciousness, and starts up with a wondering, agonised look into my face.

‘Where am I?’ he stammers. ‘Have I been to let in the Christmas?’

I feel that the words are still the delirious wanderings of a sick man, so I only soothe him as best I may, and tempt him to another cup of the strong, hot tea. He rises, with sudden, feverish strength, and gropes for his clothes.

‘I must go on at once,’ he says, speaking almost clearly. ‘Thank you, but I *must* go on now, home. The anxiety will kill my wife. Has the day dawned?’

‘Not yet. It will not be daylight for three hours yet; but the storm has ceased.’

‘Thank God! I shall be in time.’

No need to tell of my useless persuasions, entreaties, commands, repeated again and again. They are of no avail. Every plea I urge is turned aside, every argument is disregarded, every persuasion falls unheeded on his ear. As long as I can I keep him, and it is almost by force; but my weak old will is conquered by his steadfastness of purpose, and I am obliged to let him rise and dress. He would put on his own soaked and frozen clothes—which I have hung before the fire and the steam from which fills the kitchen—but in this matter it is I who conquer. Clad in my best clothes, I let him go at last. God pardon me if I have not done what I can to keep him. I have tried and failed; and I begin to think there may be some urgent reason for his going which I do not understand. I follow him to see him on his way. The snow still makes it light about us, and he will not take a lantern. As I make my way across the field, with immense difficulty, I pray ceaselessly that he may not be hastening to his death; and once more I appeal to him before we separate; miserable when I listen to his broken words of thanks, and wishing with all my heart that I was not too old and lame to take him to his journey’s end, to the home where I know there must be a young wife dearly loved. A moment after he has left me standing at the gate, he hesitates. I see a pleased, slow smile come into his face, which is only half turned from me; then he stoops, and moves his weak hands, softly and slowly, with an odd movement which I cannot understand, almost as if—the idea, though unnatural, will come into my head as I watch him—almost as if he were caressing a large dog. The fancy is born, perhaps, of his delirium, and it vanishes.

while my weak, dim eyes follow him into the white gloom of the night. The furious, crying wind is resting now, but the whole country is covered with the dangerous, drifted snow. I go back into the house, too anxious to think of going to bed myself, too much troubled to be at rest save as I tell my beads.

* * * * *

Third Narrative.

I had never in my life spent such a lonely evening before. I think I never felt so unaccountably depressed; yet I knew it would not last long, because George had promised to be home with me at midnight, and he had never broken his promise to me once since we had known each other first. This expectation took me on through the long hours which he and I ought to have been spending cheerfully and merrily together. I went downstairs to bid our men good-night, and wish them 'A merry Christmas,' as they dispersed after their gay evening; then I hurried back gladly to the sitting-room, stirred the fire, re-arranged the coffee-cups, and put George's slippers exactly in the right place for him, for midnight was striking from twenty clocks at once—as every hour does on our premises—and he would be home directly now. I sent the servants to bed. No one should let in the Christmas until George brought it, though we had always done it before while the clocks were striking and the church bells ringing. The bells were ringing now, of course, yet I could not hear them for the terrible wind that shrieked about the house, and scattered wildly and weirdly the snow that was falling so fast. It was no use my listening for his step—I knew

he would leave his horse and gig at the livery-stables and walk up the street—yet I *did* listen with every power I possessed, as I sat waiting there alone—did listen for a footfall which must be soundless on the rapidly deepening snow.

Could George break his promise to me? One o'clock! I cannot bear one o'clock. I think it is the loneliest hour of all the night. It terrifies me to hear the solitary stroke from the clocks below, even when George is with me in the night. Now it struck me like a great throb of pain. Could George break his promise to me? That was still my doubt and cry, because it was better to think that than that any accident could have happened to detain him. I opened the shutters once, but the street was so white and solitary, and the wind rushed by with such a shriek of distress, that I dared not do it again. I crept close to the fire which burned half way up the chimney, yet I shivered as if I had been out in the wind and snow.

Two o'clock! And still I listened for a footstep, though the snow was deep enough now to deaden the tramp of a thousand men. Now and then I fancied I heard wheels pass, but it could only have been the raging and roaring of the terrible night wind outside the shuttered windows. Ah! what a weary, weary thing it is to listen for a step one cannot hear!

Three o'clock!

But when I try to recall the hours as they passed, my very heart-beats cease. The anguish of that night I know will live through all my life—the long, vain, helpless watching. I knew that nothing which I could have been suffering then with George would have been so hard for me

to bear as this was. I wished I had kept one of the servants up, but I shrank from calling her. I had sent them to bed in the full expectation of my husband coming directly after they had left me; and now I could not summon them—partly because I dreaded to see or hear their fear, partly because I dreaded letting them see mine. The storm had lulled before the dawn drew near, and then I sat and waited in the silence, thinking *that* more unbearable than the rolling of the savage wind had been. I could call the servants up now, and go myself to find George, for the dawn had come at last. I knew that I looked worn and white, as if I had been ill for months, and that they were frightened by my looks when they saw me. If they had told me I was dying I should not have felt surprised, but I must die there where he was. I never thought of his broken promise now. I knew that something terrible had happened to him, and I could not breathe longer in the doubt and suspense. Surely I could start now. I tried to open the shutters, but my fingers trembled so helplessly that I hurt them in the bolt, though I could not draw it. Just as I gave up the attempt, and went out upon the stairs, I heard a slow ring at the hall-door bell. Not George's ring; yet never for a moment did I doubt that I should see *him* first when I opened the door. My fingers did not tremble now. I could draw back the heavy bolts, and unfasten the chain. The faces in the street would be bright and fresh—full of happiness to begin the Christmas Day—what would George think of mine when he met it? The door was wide open; the chill, grey light crept into the hall; and in an instant

I forgot my own pale face. One look at my husband had chased everything else from my head. Deathly, ghastfully white, he stood propped against the doorway, gazing at me vacantly and wistfully. His clothes—which looked all different from what I had ever seen them look before—hung about him, torn and frozen and bloodstained; his head and one foot were bare; his hands—groping feebly towards me—were grey and wrinkled. I put my arms round him in sudden terror. I think I felt that he was going from me. And what did it signify whose eyes could see us?

‘George, George, my love,’ I whispered, as I almost carried him in—for my strength seemed to grow tenfold when I saw his weakness—‘Home at last.’ I could not utter one word of questioning, far less of doubt; could only try to cheer him, and bring some look which I should recognise into the wandering eyes. ‘Home at last, dear George; and I’ve a beautiful fire, and hot coffee, and chops; but I think brandy will be best now—because you are so—so cold—and—and—’

But my weak attempt broke down here, in frightened sobs and kisses.

‘A happy Christmas, darling.’

The tone was so unlike my husband’s bright and cheerful tone that I dare neither answer nor look up. I was literally carrying him now up the lighted stairs—I, who that morning would have said that to carry him one step would kill me!

‘Don’t forget the dog, Annie,’ whispered George, slowly, rising in bed to speak to me the more earnestly. ‘Be good to him, and feed him, and warm him.’

‘Yes, dear, I said, smiling assuringly into his dim eyes. I had

given him the hot brandy and water, and was waiting anxiously now for the physician. And the chiming of the Christmas bells went on, and on, and on.

'He has saved my life three times, Annie; from robbers—from starvation—and from—death in sleep. Be good to him, dear.'

'Indeed, indeed I will.' The wandering eyes were a little quieter now.

'Home now—in time to bring in—the Christmas morning. Yes, just in time. A happy Christmas, darling. Just in time. He saved me, to be in time. A happy—Did I say it—Annie?'

With a great sob—a sob which made me shiver as if struck with death—he fell back lifeless on the pillow.

* * * * *

The crocuses are blooming in our windows now, and George is able to go out with me to breathe the fresh spring air, and watch how the woods are slowly brightening

into green; but he has not yet lost the traces of that night's suffering, and the long illness that followed. Ah! what a time that was! Night and day I watched him fighting with his pain, until they shut the door against me, and I could only suffer with him—O how keenly!—in my thoughts. When they let me go to him at last, the agony had worn itself out, and in the utter exhaustion which followed there was a kind of rest. I laid our little baby boy beside him, and saw the gentle, happy smile upon his lips, the grateful gladness in his eyes; then I let the little one be carried away, and I took my own place beside my husband—the place which I could never bear to leave. My long fear and watching are over now; I can recall that night even with gratitude; but George never speaks of it but with a wondering awe which half bewilders me, and which I shall never be able to understand.

MARK HARDCastle.



TRAVELS OF YOUNG CCELEBS.

CHAPTER IV.

SECOND JOURNEY.

I HAD not been a month in Tilston, when a second chance presented itself. But I have since found that is not a correct way of speaking: for it is you who present yourself to the chances, and not the chances who offer themselves to you. Life would be too short for such Micawber-like waiting for something to turn up. As a matter, of course, the low jesters and jokers of the mess were never tired of recurring to the adventure; indeed, the poverty of topics of conversation in this daily intercourse, made it a welcome godsend. The iteration, too, of the name 'Ccelebs,' or 'Syllabubs, as some put it, considered high-class jest in itself, became very tedious. I was perfectly unmoved, and looked out eagerly for the first opportunity that would carry out my cherished views, and, as the phrase runs, 'put them all in the wrong box.' This came very soon.

At one of our dinners I found myself seated beside a guest—a wiry old retired officer, who was called Colonel Macallum. I found him shy, but not without a little dry humour, and he soon became very talkative. I found out that he lived in the place, that he had one daughter, and that Mrs. Macallum was alive. He also spoke of 'the horses,' that one had tripped coming along. These two elements, an only child and a pair of horses, seemed to fall into their places in a glowing and richly coloured picture, though the foreground seemed to want an additional figure. That figure I supplied with an imaginative brush, and put myself in. In short, we got

on so pleasantly, that he begged of me to come and see them; indeed, they were talking of giving a ball for Minnie in a week or two, and a 'smart young fellow like me' might be of great use. He was sure I should like his Minnie—(I was even more sure). He could tell me there were few girls who would be so deucedly well off. (I could have told him that too.) Indeed there was to be a dinner-party to-morrow—and he didn't know but that—he thought he might—would I come, in short? I met his advances with cordiality—and agreed.

Major Phillips, at the end of the night, accosted me in his sneering way, 'Did I hear old Macallum asking you to dine?'

I answered, carelessly, that 'he did.'

'Was it endorsed by the grey mare—the superior steed?'

'I don't profess to understand your stable allusions,' I said.

'All right,' said he. 'I hope you'll find yourself at the manger, then.'

This was a poor bit of spite at not finding himself invited. But the next day, about noon, the Colonel presented himself, and with great embarrassment begged my pardon for his stupidity. That he had made a dreadful mistake. The table for the dinner party that day was quite full. Mrs. Macallum had asked a gentleman, without telling him. But she hoped, and they *all* hoped that I would not mind, but would come up in the evening. This, then, was the explanation of Phillips's mysterious 'grey mare and superior

steed.' I was much mortified, especially as he would know it; but thinking of a caution I once heard a wise old clergyman give, 'Never shut a gate behind you,' I gave a general indistinct answer, that was neither refusal nor acceptance.

When he was gone, it seemed to me rather a humiliating put off, but still as evening came on, I thought the opening too good not to be worth a little sacrifice of pride. About the dinner hour I came into the mess-room in full *toilette*, just to refute that jeering Phillips, then went to a restaurant in the town, where I dined, thence proceeded to the Macallums.

It seemed a really handsome establishment — servants, lights, and fine furniture. The ladies had come up from dinner, and I was shown in. A tall, masculine matron, about double the height of Colonel Macallum rose to receive me. Her manner was sharp, rough, and dragoon-like. My heart sank, and I felt like the miner who is suddenly stopped by a vast mass of rock—and that nothing short of 'blasting'—(I mean, of course, with gunpowder)—would get this woman out of my path. She looked at me suspiciously, and I really think divined my purpose.

'Macallum is always doing something stupid. He'd spoil every party we give, if he was allowed.'

This seemed brusque, to say the least of it, but I could afford to pass it over. I saw that there was about a dozen ladies—matrons and virgins—seated in the attitudes of self exhibition with which they wait to receive their recent companions. I was surprised that she did not volunteer to introduce her daughter, but I quietly reminded her of the omission;

'Perhaps you would be kind enough to present me to Miss Macallum.'

She did so in a rapid, brusque style, as if it was a disagreeable duty to be got over speedily, and went back to the other matrons.

This Minnie Macallum was a fair-haired, rather 'giggling,' young creature, plainly full of spirits. I could see that she adored the profession, so we were the best friends in a moment. She had a sort of mischievous humour, which was pleasing to those, I suppose, who were not the subject of it.

I sat down beside her and made great way. I told her, *after my own way*, that another might have been 'huffed' at being put off so unceremoniously, but that I had heard so much about *her* that I was determined to come at every sacrifice.'

'Pon my word,' she said, laughing, 'it's a pity I have no sister to whom you could say that, and balance one against the other.'

This alluded to my late adventure, and was scarcely fair, on so slight an acquaintance. It rather damped me. However, as I had heard my father say, a man that would marry an heiress, must carry a thick skin, and pocket mud. This was a coarse way of putting it, but there was some truth in it. I changed the subject to their coming ball, which I found was to be in a fortnight, and which she announced was to be the most magnificent thing of the kind ever given in Tilston. A contractor from London was to cover in the garden—run a sort of pavilion round the house, and all was to be filled with the most lovely exotics.

We both grew excited, as we talked over these grand plans; and she declared I must come and see them, help them with advice, &c.

This was not such a bad beginning; and I went home more than contented. A day later I

paid the family a visit, and was received by the young lady and her papa graciously enough. They were both full of the coming ball and the preparation. The London contractor was coming down by appointment the following afternoon, when a grand consultation was to be held. I gave some suggestions, which were considered to be valuable, and with them inspected all the premises. This, 'being taken into council,' engendered a sort of confidential relation, which, in *affairs of this kind*, I consider highly valuable. It puts you on a sound footing, gives you a basis, as it were. You become independent of the conventional restraints of time and place, and, above all, of third parties. Thus it was quite natural that the old officer should go away to his club, saying, 'Well, I suppose you two can plan out all this without me,' and we both agreed that we could. As we were thus agreeably engaged, in the garden, Mrs. Macallum suddenly arrived.

'What's all this?' she said, with that brusque, almost unladylike, manner of hers. 'What are you doing here?'

'We are the architects and surveyors,' I answered, gaily. 'We are planning all sorts of structures for the ball.'

'Where's your father?' she went on, not answering me. 'Just like his stupidity. Come in out of the garden at once. I am amazed at your folly.'

'It was my fault,' I said, soothingly. 'Pray don't be angry with Miss Macallum. I was suggesting an open gallery of canvas round here.'

'You are giving yourself a great deal of trouble,' she said. 'And I fear we are only keeping you from your military duties. Come upstairs, child. You are

only detaining this gentleman. You must excuse me, Mr.—er—'

She pretended to have forgotten my name. 'Quentin,' I suggested.

'Mr. Quentin. We have a great deal to do, and you must let me treat you without ceremony, and send you away. It seems a little unpolite; but you must really excuse me.'

Seems! It was unpolite. It was curious, the persistent manner of this lady to me—so steadily hostile. It was evident that she had an imperfect sympathy towards me, and that she was destined to be a breaker ahead in *this* affair, which otherwise promised well. A little reflection when I got home showed me the solution. She scented danger—was *afraid*—afraid that I might rob her of her charge, or of her charge's allowance. This seemed to me a very unworthy feeling, and might justify me in pursuing such aims as I had in view.

I did not like, however, exposing myself to her unladylike reception, so I took care to pay my visits at such times as I thought she was not likely to be at home. I always received a good-natured welcome. I could see I was gradually making my way with Miss Minnie, who had a light, sisterly manner towards me, which in such things I hold to be akin—and not that hackneyed 'Pity'—to love. Suffice it to say I was more than content. Phillips and the other fellows were ready to burst with envy: especially when it got abroad that a good deal of the elaborate decorations was owing to my suggestions. On the day preceding the ball I walked boldly in, and found the contractor and his men hard at work. It was amazing, the transformation that had been effected in the short

time. The whole garden had been covered in like some vast tent, and was hung in perfect festoons of coloured lamps, which, however graceful to the eye, might cause any one of ordinary prudence serious apprehensions as to fire. The choicest flowers—a whole greenhouse full—were already in their places: but the frail rails and wooden supports on which they rested ominously suggested weakness. I shared the general enthusiasm, but these doubts disturbed me, and I could not resist mentioning them. Minnie laughed in her cheery way. 'O, nonsense!' she said. Her mother came in at this moment. 'O, you are here, Mr.—er—Quentin!' Now, we are much pressed, and want to get all finished, so I really must turn you out.' I rather resented this extraordinary tone, and replied, with dignity, 'I have not interfered in any way with your preparations, Mrs. Macallum. I must say, however, that you ought to be on your guard—'

'Against what, pray?'

'It is dangerous. I may be wrong, but it looks dangerous.'

The contractor's foreman was standing by.

'There ain't a stronger nor a stouter piece of work in the country. Where's the danger—how's the danger?'

I answered, calmly, 'It seems weak.'

'Fiddledee,' said the man, impudently.

Mrs. Macallum laughed. 'I'll leave it to that honest fellow,' she said, 'Now, do go, Mr. Quentin; and don't let us see you till to-morrow night, at your peril.'

I had serious thoughts of not going after this brusque treatment, but a look from Minnie, at parting, reconciled me. Further, I had laid out for that night the

denouement of the whole. A ball-room is always a fitting scene for such a crisis: but the ball at the party's own house—the intoxication of triumph—homage from all—the whirl of success—make the occasion still more suitable. Believe me, I know human nature. I wrote to my family on the same day, hinting a little mysteriously at what might take place: 'To-morrow night, my dear father, I do hope to lay some substantial foundation, and to be able to report something encouraging. Everything is going well. I do not like to say more, but things are in train—mum. All I ask in return is, that in future you will have confidence in my sagacity.'

The night arrived. Never was there such a fairy scene witnessed in the town. As we drove up we could see afar off the illuminated tent-work: round the building there was a vast crowd gathered watching the guests arrive. We entered through a blazing avenue, lined with green shrubs and blazing lights—both in a dangerous contiguity. We passed through the hall, all lamps and flowers, to the garden, an Aladdin's palace, hung in all directions with lamps: while overhead had been run out, from the drawing-room, a daringly frail structure, something like a hurricane-deck, which went all round the house. No expense had been spared, and the whole had the appearance, as the newspaper later described it, 'of Fairy land.' All the *élite* of the town had been invited; and of course 'our regiment was present, in about half its officer-strength.'

It was not a little triumph when I, with Miss Minnie on my arm, passed by a group of these jeering fellows, with Phillips at their head, who now saw me, as 'cavalier of honour,' escorting

the young princess of this gorgeous castle. I could hear Phillips making some of what he called his sarcastic remarks. But it has been said often, 'those may laugh who win,' or who are winning. She was in great spirits, and, indeed, had herself proposed that we should take an expedition and go round and inspect all the beautiful preparations. 'I am so bored,' she said, 'bowing to and receiving these people. Mamma isn't looking now. So let us escape.' Thus we set off. We soon almost lost ourselves. 'Isn't it all pretty,' she said; 'and all in honour of me?'

'It is pretty,' I said, with deep meaning; 'very pretty.'

'What in particular?' she answered, with a quick laugh.

'The centre attraction of all,' I said; 'whom it is all in honour of, as you said.'

'Well, I declare!' she said, with a burst of laughter. 'You are beginning to talk nonsense. That won't do, you know.'

But she was not displeased.

'Perhaps I do talk nonsense,' I said. 'But who is accountable for it? You know.'

'Do you mean me?' she asked, innocently.

'Suppose I do,' I said, gloomily. 'You will only laugh, and say that I am complimenting you.'

'No one would call that a compliment,' she said,—'that I am the cause of your talking nonsense. How very different you are from Mr. Halliburton, who showed me his poems the other day, and said that I was the cause of any sense that was to be found in it. That was something like a compliment.'

'If he meant it,' I said, bitterly. 'But these men, with their poems——'

'Meant it!' she said, a little haughtily. 'Do you mean to say,

I could not inspire a writer with sense? Thank you! Now stop—you must say no more on this, or you will only sink deeper.'

'But let me explain!' I said, eagerly. 'You don't understand me—and how deeply, and fervently——'

A stern, brusque voice behind—

'What nonsense this is! You are like a child, Minnie. Here I have been looking for you everywhere. Really, Mr—er' (she would always pretend to forget my name) —'Mr. Quentin, I must ask you to go and dance, and leave my daughter to myself to-night. We have both a great many duties to look to; and it's really not fair. You really oblige me to speak plainly to you, for you don't, or won't, take a hint. Come away at once, Minnie. Here, I'll get this gentleman a partner at once. Do you know Miss Lightbound——?'

To this mean and unworthy cut I made no answer. But I could see that Minnie felt for me. She seemed to give me a look, as who should say, 'Later, later. We shall find a better opportunity.' She went away, 'giggling,' and nodding to me. She had the makings of a perfect actress; but I could have wished for a little firmness and steadiness on her side.

'Any one could bend her,' I said, reflectively, laying my hand on one of the frail supports of the balconies, 'like this weak thing, which any one could bend, if not break.'

'That bain't so,' said a coarse voice beside me—'no, nor nothing like it, neither. What game is this you're arter?—trying to pick holes in a man's work, and take away his character? Are you going into business yourself?'

I recognised the contractor, whom I had met there a few days before. He was naturally touchy about his work.

' You mistake,' I said. ' I have no such end in view. I know very little about these matters: only, to my eye, all this seems very weak.'

' Well, your eye knows nothing about it, and had best leave it alone. I've seen what you're at—pisoning the minds of a family against a man. It's not what a real gentleman would do.'

' Hush! hush!' I said, with dignity. ' Recollect where you are, and who you are speaking to.'

' Pulling and bending at a man's work,' continued he, angrily. ' Blow me, if I don't believe you are here to play some trick with the work, and then lay it on me! Talk of *your* eye, indeed! I'll keep mine on you.'

Certainly, the insolence of people of his class is wonderful. But I had determined for *her* sake—Minnie's—to keep a restraint on myself. So, without a remark, I turned from the fellow and passed on.

The rather unworthy animosity of the mother only developed as the night advanced. I made several attempts to secure the hand of her daughter for the dance; but the matron guarded her in the most jealous and watchful manner. The little thing all the while was smiling at me good-humouredly, and nodding, as she tripped off with some *man* selected by this dragon. Growing desperate at last—for I felt the work was to be done that night, or never: that here was 'the iron'—the 'heat,' and all that was wanting was room to strike—I stopped her as she was returning, leaning on her partner's arm.

' You *must* give me one dance,' I said—' the next valse—galop—which is it to be?'

She was shaking her small head—' No; I am not to do it; and I don't want to be scolded. Mamma

says, she is certain you will fall, or trip up, and tear my beautiful dress. I don't think so, of course.'

Her partner burst into a horse-laugh. ' Whata sagacious mamma!' he said.

I gave him a look of dignity and contempt mixed. She was inclined to be mischievous on this night.

' Besides, you said that I was accountable for all the nonsense you talked. Wasn't that a shame, Mr. Halliburton?'

' I certainly would not dance with any one who made such a speech.'

' As to *your* opinion,' I said, ' that is—as it may be. Come,' I added, ' there is the valse beginning. Do—do, I beg of you,—just one! I have something *so* particular to explain—I have indeed!'

She was irresolute. There again! It was enough to make one swear.

' Something particular to say to my daughter! Then I beg there will be nothing of the kind. You will please mention it to me, if it is at all important. Now, dear, here is Mr. Boldero waiting. Dance with him. Go.'

In a moment she was gone.

' Now, Mr—er Quentin, what is this "something," so particular?'

' Oh, this is outrageous!' I said, angrily. ' What have I done, that you should set yourself against me in this way, from the very first day? What does it mean? But you had better take care, Mrs. Macallum! No one of spirit could submit to be checked and thwarted at every turn—so, take care, I say!'

' I declare!—threatening me, a lady, in my own house! Well, this is amusing! Really, though, I wish you would leave Minnie alone. You see, I have a presentiment about you—that you are unlucky, and will bring about something awkward. I dare say I am quite

wrong: but you wish to know the truth.'

' You are candid at all events,' I said, with a grim smile and bow.

' I like to be. So now you will be good, and *not tease Minnie* any more. Don't look so wickedly at me;—you are not vindictive, I hope. You won't revenge yourself on us?'

I made no reply; but I *was* vindictive. I began to lose hope, and flung myself down into a spindle-legged chair, which, like everything about me—my hopes included—seemed frail and tottering. In a retired corner, I tilted myself back and watched the distant spectacle: the waltzers dimly seen floating round, the music borne to me faintly. What followed may seem strange; but I was fatigued and felt an irresistible weariness. We had had a heavy drill that morning. I sat there, looking on at the curious scene, leaning against the thin lath-wall just behind me, the whirling figures making my eyes droop.

I must have dozed—that is to say, nodded a little; at least I experienced what *must* have been a dream. Certainly the company, the whole scene was there before me, the music in my ears—but gradually all appeared to take a sort of pandemonium shape, every one whirling and whirling round like dervishes. The fiddles, brass instruments, &c., broke out into fearful crashes! I saw her, the pretty Minnie, swept round with the rest in the arms of a gigantic officer, with horns, as it seemed to me, and a tail—though this might have been some morbid optical delusion. She seemed to throw appealing glances of terror at me, as if imploring aid. But I was powerless.

The next moment the whole temporary edifice seemed to totter;

the sounds of cracking and smashing were borne to my ear. A great beam slowly drooped, and in another moment would have fallen on her pretty form and crushed her. The bonds that held me to my seat were suddenly burst, and I leaped wildly forward to save her: and not a minute too soon!

I was awake. Had it fallen on my chair instead, crashing it into splinters? At least the legs had shivered beneath me. As I fell, I caught at some frail laths, concealed in blue and pink calico behind me, and which gave way in my hand with loud cracking. The whole thing was coming down, as I had only too faithfully presaged; and, rushing forward, I called out to them, 'Save yourselves!—the building is falling!'

The terrible scene that followed cannot be described. The music stopped; the fiddlers, horn men, leaping from the orchestra; the dancers flying to the door, the girls screaming. There was a descent of some temporary wooden steps at the door, and there the block, crush, tearing of dresses was something appalling. Elderly women were thrown down, and—to their shame be it spoken—trampled on by dancers, men, striving to get out first. One lady's wrist was broken. But here was the strangest thing of all. As I was myself struggling for that fatal doorway, I saw the piteous face, that I had seen in my dream—Minnie's—a sort of ghastly terror over it. She was deserted by her companion, and was fainting—would have fallen had I not rushed forward and caught her. I tried to lift her in my arms, but her dress was wedged in, on both sides, in the mass of packed humanity. There was no extrication; so I tore away the frail skirt, and, raising her in my arms, tramped and fought my way, like the rest, through the passage.

There we found a gasping, hysterical, frantic multitude, their dress torn to tatters; some were even bleeding. Some of the musicians had got there, and one was holding a shattered fiddle in his hand. But all were now safe, under the strong roof of the main building.

I saw a figure tossing her arms wildly, and I heard a voice almost shrieking, 'My child! my Minnie! Where is she? Oh, my child!'

Here was surely a noble revenge. 'Here!' I shouted, as I carried up my burden. 'She is safe. Not in the least hurt; only frightened.'

Her condition was indeed pitiable, her dress entirely torn away; but she was now recovering. The mother clasped her in her arms, but took no notice of the one who had saved her treasure. At such a moment one could be indulgent.

We were all huddled into that sort of little black hole, and all happily saved. All had got away in time from underneath the disastrous structure. There was a din of voices. 'What was it?' 'What is it?' 'The place on fire!' 'Roof falling in,' with a number of such incoherent exclamations and explanations.

That Halliburton who had been peering cautiously into the scene of wreck, then went back and walked round, all following him with their eyes.

'Why,' he called out from the far end. 'Why, it's all right. There's nothing falling or fallen.'

'Take care!' they called out. 'Do, for heaven's sake.'

'Everything's in its place. There is only a broken chair, which has given way under somebody, and this torn calico. It's a false alarm.'

'A false alarm!' said Mrs. Macallum, furiously; 'a false alarm! It's been done on purpose then, and maliciously.'

'We should call in the police,'

said Mr. Halliburton. 'Lives might have been lost. Who called out first? I heard some one do it.'

'Why, it's this here gemmen, and no other,' said the contractor. 'I've had my eye on him. The whole night he's been at it; picking holes in my work, poisoning people's minds against it. Blowed if I don't have the law against you.'

'It was this idiot,' said Mrs. Macallum, furiously. 'He's been prying about here for days, prophesying that it would come down. What do you mean, sir? How dare you—such a cruel, cowardly—' and she burst into a hysterical fit of crying.

The people about said, 'Shame! You ought to be ducked in a horsepond for such a trick.'

'Trick!' I said, angrily. 'And this after, it may be, saving your lives. Look for yourselves: the very chair on which I was sitting crushed to splinters; the framework behind me forced out. I suppose I was not right to give you all warning. Perhaps you are sorry that it has *not* fallen in?'

'What humbugging this is,' said one ungentlemanly fellow.

'You hear him, gents?' roared the contractor, who seemed to have the bitterest animosity against me. 'He's a li-bellying the work! Blowed if I don't stop his mouth on the spot.'

'This is all sheer fooling,' said another ungentlemanly man. 'It must be all investigated.'

'Get away—quick,' said a good-natured voice beside me, which I recognised as that of Kinahan. 'I'll back you up. Look here,' he said; 'it's all some mistake, and a very stupid one, I own. This gentleman was asleep—I saw him; and, I suppose, had a nightmare. He'll make every apology and *amende* that any one wants.'

You see it's not fair to keep the ladies here in this condition.'

Under cover of this friendly defence I got away, indignant at the treatment I had received for my well-meant warning. I cared not whether the building was strong or weak. I had done what any man ought to have done, when he heard the ominous sounds. Forsooth, a sentry is to be blamed, on these new principles, if he gives an alarm, though the object of that alarm should prove not to be an enemy. This resolution I came to, however: never to volunteer any good-natured action of the kind. You get no thanks.

The confusion in the place for the next week could not be conceived — several ill-conditioned, rough men—notably the husband of the lady whose wrist had been so unfortunately hurt—insisting on seeing me, and breathing unseemly threats. My friend Kinahan would not let me see them, though I was quite willing to do so. I could have given them a reasonable explanation. He was a good fellow; and though he forgot himself so far as to ask something to the effect 'as to how I

could be such a fool of the first water?' I could pass it over, in consideration of his well-meant efforts in my service.

Mrs. Macallum, however, was implacable; was—and is—the most deadly enemy I have in the world. She says I did it out of spite, or sheer idiotey. That she had taken my measure from the first day, and had tried to keep me aloof, having a presentiment that I should bring them some trouble or mess. Presentiment, indeed! Does not that single word condemn her, out of her own mouth?

This unpleasant adventure was a check for some time to my further plans. But I never lost hope for a moment. As Kinahan said, 'everything blows over—even an earthquake.' I could not help smiling at this very Irish illustration. But he was really a good fellow, and exerted himself for me.

But presently came the welcome news of a change of quarters. This happy release was like the news of a fresh 'digging' for the toiling miner.



A LAY OF FEB. 14, 1872.

I.—THE GRAND CHARGE OF LADIES.

OF old the Amazonian maids
 With glittering spear and targe,
 On slaughter bent, their foes disprent
 By famed Hydaspis' marge :
 'Extinction to the hated race'—
 This was their war cry then—
 'Away from off our kingdom's face
 With all the sons of men.'

Such deeds of misanthropic rage
 Are writ on legendary page ;
 And how the Scythian river's flow
 Blushed with the blood of each male foe
 Herodotean annals tell,
 As 'every school boy' knows full well.
 A fair, maybe, but deadly race—
 Know we the like to take their place ?

'Good Morrow ! 'tis St. Valentine's day'—
 Of leap year, seventy-two,
 Dear to the bard of amorous lay,
 Dear to the cook-maid, Sue ;
 When poets rhyme, and postmen groan,
 And lovers falsehoods swear.
 But hark ! a sound—a warlike moan
 Startles the upper air !

They come ! they come ! 'tis still the cry ;
 Above, below, around, on high,
 There beats the furious tide of war,
 'And all the welkin rings afar.'
 Though not equipped with classic targe
 These fiery maids, as on they charge,
 Their yielding foes each way beat down—
 As, *vide*, in our picture shown.

Swift, fierce, and thick throughout the air
 The arrows hurtling fly ;
 No keener shafts, I ween, there were
 In classic days gone by.
 From Cupid's quiver every dart
 Is feathered, winged, and ta'en,
 And many, aye, many a manly heart
 Is pierced with mortal pain !



BATTLE OF ST. VALENTINE—GRAND CHARGE OF LADIES IN LEAP YEAR.

BATTLE OF ST. VALENTINE.—GRAND CHARGE OF LADIES IN LEAP YEAR.



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AFTER THE BATTLE.—LEADING AWAY THE CAPTIVES.

II.—AFTER THE BATTLE.

So raged the battle the long hours through
 On the feast of Valentine seventy-two,
 And Cupid, noting the turn of the fray,
 Vowed himself pleased with the well-won day ;
 For all the time on a tree above
 Was perched the bellicose god of love—
 The maiden's friend and the bachelor's foe—
Experto crede,—ask those who know.

Strange was the sight, yet comical too,
 The spot where the battle had raged to view ;
 Of feminine prowess the signs were there,
 Such as to make e'en Cupid stare.
 Bachelors aged fifty-two,
 Their stout old hearts pierced through and through
 With the arrows aimed by sweet seventeen ;
 These were incidents in the scene.

Here a widow, and there a maid,
 Prostrate her feeble mark had laid.
 Elderly gentlemen gasped in despair,
 Touching their hearts, asked what was there ;
 Feebly murmuring, wanted to know
 Why they were not proof against the blow ?
 Leonine swells and luckless youth
 All admitted the victory's truth.

And the captive crowd, a piteous crew,
 As they went in companies two by two !
 Each vanquished male, with downcast air,
 Chained to the side of his conquering fair.
 Yet the hands that struck were the hands that cured,
 And the captives forgot their wrongs endured.
 So Ovid remarks,—and the comment is true,—
 ' The wounder in love is the healer too.'

L'ENVOI.

Such is the lay of the battle,
 Fought leap year, A.D. seventy-two,
 Such is our Amazons' mettle,
 Dauntless and merciless too.
 Once a year comes Christmas only ;
 Tell me, now, do ye deplore—
 Tell me, ye bachelors lonely,
 That leap year comes once but in four ?

FRENCH NOVELISTS.

NO. II.—GEORGES SAND.

AMANTINE LUCILE MARIE AUBRE DUPIN, afterwards Madame la Baronne Dudevant, afterwards Georges Sand, may well be called a European celebrity: In her own country she has excited both the utmost enthusiasm and the extreme of opposition. In Russia, *canards* were circulated as to whether she did not wear a peaked felt hat, set jauntily over one ear, a moustache, and spurs, and whether she did not make a great-coat of her abundantly flowing hair. In Italy she was welcomed by the advanced party as a fellow-worker; and she met with the recognition of our own country in a magnificent sonnet by our greatest poetess. With all this, we can scarcely go so far as those who say that she is the muse of the nineteenth century—that there is 'in her carriage something haughty and proud, which fills with amaze; in her language a mystic melody, which includes at once the rhythm of Homer and Virgil, the *verve* of Juvenal, the sublimity of Dante, and the sarcasm of Byron.' Were she possessed of all these attributes, we might indeed expect to find her a woman with a moustache and spurs, astride upon the back of an awe-inspiring Pegasus, careering through the ether in the midst of lightnings and incense and imprecations. If, on the contrary, we could have looked in upon this prodigy at one period of her life, we should have found her in a garret, painting flowers, and withal somewhat badly off for bread.

Marie Aurore Dupin, *alias* Georges Sand, was the only child of Maurice Dupin, who married and died young, after attaining to a high

grade in the army of the Empire. This Maurice Dupin was the only child of a lady who deserves notice, not only for the influence she had upon our heroine, but from her own remarkable originality, and the vivid colour of her character. She was a philosopher of a school that is now somewhat lessened in influence, and she held fast to her doctrines, unevangelical though they might be, with a persistent and charming independence. She doubtless owed something of her characteristic eccentricities to her origin; and we can scarcely wonder at the vagaries of her granddaughter, when we consider the unconventionality and wildness of blood of a long line of her ancestors. The grandmother of Georges Sand was the daughter of the Maréchal de Saxe and an actress who, we are told, formed a unit in his large collection of sultanas. This Maurice de Saxe had fought at Fontenoy, and was the natural son of Auguste II., King of Poland, and the Countess of Koenigsmark. Marie Aurore de Saxe married Messire Antoine de Horne, who died in three years, when the widow, at that time about thirty, contracted a second alliance with M. Dupin, whose age was sixty-two. This was for her a true love match, it appears, in spite of the disparity of years; and it is worth while to quote the answer of this lady, when aged herself, to her granddaughter of future celebrity, whom she had heard say that it was impossible to love an old man. 'An old man loves more than a young one,' said she; 'and it is impossible not to love one who loves us perfectly. I called him my old husband and my papa.'

He shared in this arrangement, and never called me anything but his daughter, even in public. And besides,' added she, 'do you think any one was ever old at that time? *It is the Revolution which has brought old age into the world.* Your grandfather, my child, was handsome, elegant, elaborate, graceful, perfumed, playful, amiable, affectionate, and of an equable temper until the hour of his death. Younger, he would have been too amiable to have a life so calm.' This happy couple were full of refined tastes, and spent their lives in artistic enjoyments, in which they ruined themselves, 'in the most amiable manner in the world,' as this old lady-philosopher asserts. She takes occasion, too, to scorn the newer ways of life, and staunchly upholds the superiority of dying at a ball or play, to submitting to fate in one's bed, between four wax-tapers, and in the midst of wicked men in black; and her husband's last words of farewell to her were an injunction to survive him as long as possible, and to make herself a happy life. We may thus see what original influences were about Madame Sand in her younger days. She was brought up by this grandmother, at the château of Nohant, and, at fifteen years old, could handle a gun, dance, mount on horseback, and draw a sword. She was, we are told, an adorable and petulant Amazon, a charming feminine demon, who could follow the pastime of coursing under the avenues of Marly, but who was totally ignorant as regards the sign of the cross. It was insinuated to the grandmother that the pious Restoration did not exactly share the doctrines of Jean Jacques Rousseau (who had been a personal friend of the Dupin family), but that it was highly desirable that young persons should be educated in a different manner from that

practiced with regard to 'Emile.' The grandmother professed much surprise, and gave her adviser to understand that in matters of philosophy, she held but a poor opinion of the nineteenth century.

In the beautiful garden of the Vallée Noire, where fragrant meadows stretched onwards for league on league, Georges Sand grew out of childhood like a wild flower, untrained and unpruned. An enthusiastic old botanist, named Neraud, whom, on account of the fairy-like descriptions which he was wont to give of the Isle of Madagascar and the various regions he had visited in his long voyages, she had baptized Malgache, was her constant companion. He was a dry little copper-coloured man, rather worse dressed than a peasant, who had travelled over the mountainous isles of the South Seas in search of rare specimens, until his finances failed him, and he had been compelled to return home in rags and emaciation. He had gained his heart's desire, nevertheless, and a beautiful fern, before unknown, was named after him. This oddity divided his time between planting Madagascar flowers and rare exotics in the soil of Berry, and the study of advanced politics, in the pursuit of which in youth he had gone to every popular outbreak, and received many a sabre-cut on the head. His first acquaintance with Georges Sand was made in a singular manner. She, galloping past his flowering groves one morning at day-break, was suddenly arrested in her course by the sight of some magnificent dahlias. They were the first seen in France, and the first she had ever seen. She was only sixteen, and she got down from her horse to steal one, and then galloped away with her prize. The old nurseryman—for thus he wished himself to be called—must

have witnessed the theft, for, soon after, she received a present from him of a number of roots for planting. From this time dated their acquaintance; and a few years after they became intimate friends.

The girl, with her splendid brown hair, her strongly marked features, and her impetuous bearing, ran wild in the pleasant valley which contained her grandmother's château. In perfect liberty she would run about all day, in her short petticoats, pursue butterflies along the winding ways of the valley, and return home to enjoy her brilliant grandmother's stories of the pomps of Versailles, the lives of *roués* and philosophers, and the ways of a society in which rigidity of morals was almost a matter of ridicule. Between her first and second marriage, the old Countess had retired to Abbaye-aux-Bois, and there kept open house for the wits and *servants* of the time. We can scarcely wonder at the admiration excited by this lively old lady in an imaginative and spirited child. In the Château de Nohant, too, there was a large library, to which the young girl had unrestricted access; and at one time, '*Corinne*', '*Atala*', and *Lavater* were her constant companions. As she grew older, more influence was used with her grandmother, with respect to her education. The old lady at length, finding the aristocratic influence too strong for her, feigned compliance with the dictates of society, and outwardly renounced her philosophic method. Whereupon, under the pressure of the religious reaction and anti-Voltaire feelings which had sprung up, it was decided that Aurora should be sent to a convent to receive the rudiments—of which she was yet entirely ignorant—of religious instruction. The narrow boundaries of conventional life galled greatly, at first, her soaring spirit,

and the banishment from her beloved and unconventional grandmother inflicted on her severe pain; but, after a time, the influences of Catholicism began to gain upon her, and she abandoned herself to the intoxication of religious fervour. She passed, it is said, like Saint Thérèse, whole hours in ecstasy at the altar's foot. About this time the old Countess of Horne died, and her granddaughter, after an absence of a few weeks from the convent, returned with a full intention of taking the veil. The influence of her whole family was, very naturally—she was an heiress of half-a-million francs—directed against her taking this step. But the husband chosen for her was unsuitable in every respect. M. le Baron Dudevant was a retired military officer who had turned farmer; and, in place of satisfying the romantic enthusiasm of his young wife, was assiduous in the breeding of his cattle, and himself the superintendent of his labourers on the farm. The depiction of a character meant to represent this unsatisfactory husband is to be found in one of his wife's novels—'*Indiana*.' 'He was,' we are told, a man with a grey moustache, a terrible eye; an austere master, before whom all trembled—wife, servants, horses, and dogs.' And this was the man destined to realise the passionate ideal of a high-spirited girl just fresh from the exciting spiritualism of a Parisian convent! She was seventeen: and from the midst of a prosaic and monotonous existence, she saw her fortune spent in importing new breeds of sheep, magnificent specimens of bulls, and a large number of farm-waggons. Two children were born to her while doing the honours of the farm, as the Baroness Dudevant; and their infantile affection assisted her much towards that 'angelic resignation'

with which, we are told, she bore her griefs. Soon, however, the laws of her nature asserted their sway, and even her children were unable to save her from spiritual numbness and despair. She fell ill, and the medical faculty of Berry ordered her the waters of the Pyrenees. From this time commenced a new epoch in her life. The bucolic baron was far too closely bound up with his agricultural improvements, to be the companion of his young wife on her journey, so a chance of seeing the world became open to her. At Bordeaux, through which town she passed, letters of introduction from old friends of her family brought her into brilliant society, where, we learn, homage and adoration surrounded her without ceasing. A ship-owner of Bordeaux—a man of distinction and merit—lost his heart hopelessly to the charming young baroness; but she was possessed of sufficient strength to resist his advances. Still, a sort of sacrificial ceremony appears to have been enacted between them at parting, which took place in the Valley of Argèles, at the foot of the Pyrenees, the grandiose solemnity of whose peaks, we are told in truly French style, elevated their souls to the required height of sacrifice. After being subject to the waters—and, we might add, the fires—of the Pyrenees, Madame Dudevant returned home to the old, dreary, monotonous round, that was not life, but death, to one of her passionate and idealistic nature. But her travels had taught her a way which seemed to promise relief. She surrounded herself with celebrities in poetry, science, and art, in order to bring as near as possible the life for which she craved, and so the better to fight against the ideas of revolt, over which she began to have less and less the mastery.

It was the old battle—between nature and convention. The strong god of imagination met in an ecstatic wrath with the prosaic shackles of propriety and routine, and hacked and hewed them with his flaming sword. But the sword felt the pain, not the bonds. Though she might surround herself, to some extent, with the artistic society that she loved, yet she did not belong to it; from out the sphere of her drear and inharmonious domesticity she looked upon it as through a grating. She sickened of her captivity. Her grandmother had inoculated her early with philosophic notions of liberty; Malgache had afforded her glimpses of a political creed of the most advanced type, and possibly had also communicated to her something of the restlessness of his travel-loving spirit. Her ancestors had supplied her with a heaving flood of impetuous blood, and nothing of the fibrous element of discipline and self-control; their history, too, was a register giving evidence rather of eccentric freedom than of decorum. She heard Art, with a mystic voice, call her to a land of beautiful liberty, a land wherein she dreamed her soul could take delight. She listened with more and more emotion to the seductive whispers of this impulsive voice, and at length she obeyed them. One day, early in the year 1828, she was missing.

Among the persons of literary tastes who had frequented her home *soirées*, was a young man of the name of Jules Sandeau, who, like every one else, had fallen desperately in love with his fair hostess, and with whom—they were both equally young and inexperienced—she had shared much in literary sympathies. We are told that these two made the journey to Paris together; but it appears that immediately after her

arrival there the runaway made application to be received back into the convent of the 'Dames-Anglaises,' where she had spent the last days of her maidenhood. Into this tranquil retreat, after some little difficulty—for her readmission was not in accordance with rule—our *ci-devant* farmer's-wife fled for refuge, but only to become painfully sensible that she had but exchanged one cage for another. After a few days, she broke again through her bars, and found herself alone in Paris. 'Here, then,' says a French sympathiser, 'is this wife who has violently made herself free, this poet who has taken flight, cast without support, without protectors, into this gulf which is called Paris—hell for some, paradise for others. What is to become of this young and noble lady, without resources, without friends?' She had quitted her home without money; she had no friends. Yes, there was one—the young aspirant with whom she had travelled. In a very short time, the pair were looking out upon Paris together from the windows of a modest garret. We must not now picture to ourselves, as their place of abode, the fusty and squalid attic-rooms, such as are to be found in many a London lodging-house. The little rooms of a Parisian *hôtel garni* or *maison meublée* will generally be found, from ground-floor to roof, bright, fresh and cheerful. Here our fugitive drank of the cup of liberty to the dregs. The following paragraph, taken from one of her romances, may be taken as embodying the wild delight of the escaped captive:—'Oh, green Bohemia, fantastic realm of souls without ambition and without shackles, I go then to revisit thee! Oft have I wandered upon thy mountains, and fluttered above the summits of thy fir-trees. Well indeed do I

remember it, although I was yet unborn among men; and the misfortune that came to me is, not to have been able to forget thee while living here.' In Paris she did indeed enjoy to the full the regained 'green Bohemia' of her dreams. Whilst, in her earlier days, an inmate of the decorous and aristocratic convent of the 'Dames-Anglaises,' she had, on account of her brusque and energetic manners, been nicknamed by her companions 'The Little Boy.' They would have found stronger grounds for their *soubriquet* had they met with her in this stage of her career. She would take long, wandering walks over Paris, with her companion, freed from the incommodious and embarrassing garments of her sex, and admitted to equal fellowship with her brother Bohemian by her investiture in the nobler apparel of a man. But there was that unfortunate nuisance, the pecuniary question. They were both almost without means; and the contemplation of the manner of their future subsistence became serious. The baroness painted flowers; but this placed but a feeble barrier between them and starvation. At length her energy began to manifest itself. She wrote an article, and presented herself in person at the office of 'Figaro.' She must have been in feminine attire, for the editor-in-chief described her to one of his friends as 'a young and pretty woman.' With respect to her literary *début* we find two accounts given. One takes note of no difficulties whatever, and leads us to understand that she was asked for articles, which were immediately published; whereupon she was recommended to compose a romance, the road being made all smooth to her, with no difficulty or disappointment whatever coming in her way. We are inclined to give credit to the other

account, as more natural. She offered her article to the editor, who replied that his supply of matter was sufficient, and that he had no room for the work of outsiders; but, remarking something noble in her mien and accent, and something extraordinary in the depth of her eye, he bade her leave the article for him to examine. It proved detestable, he avowed to his friend; but, after cancelling several passages, and adding others, he published it in a totally modified form. Three days afterwards, the importunate beauty returned to the charge with a second article, which was worth still less than the former one. The accommodating editor published it; but his patience was limited—he refused the third. The fair authoress again presented herself at the office. We will let the editor give his own account of what passed between them: “‘Madame,’ said I to our lady from the country, with that frankness which characterizes me, and at the risk even of wounding her self-love, ‘I declare to you that your two articles have produced a sad effect. I counsel you, then, to renounce a profession which, besides, affords a very poor maintenance even for writers endowed with incontestable talent.’” “Well, then,” answered our lady, resignedly, “I understand painting; I will make pictures.” “Painting!” cried the editor, “that is even worse than letters. Write a novel, madame, I believe that you will succeed.” And so journalism was renounced.

On the lady’s return from the newspaper office, the two in the garret put their heads together; and the result was, that they both set to work, and produced between them a romance, to which they gave the title of ‘*Rose et Blanche; ou, la Religieuse et la Comédiennne*.’ It may easily be imagined, from

this title, that some of the lady’s experiences in the aristocratic seminary were utilized. They were indeed made the subject of a caustic sketch. The manuscript was taken to the kind editor of the ‘*Figaro*,’ who read it, and deemed it worth printing. He even took some trouble to look out a publisher for it, and shortly afterwards the novel made its appearance in the world. As to the author’s name, which should appear on the titlepage, there had been a little difficulty, Madame Dudevant not wishing her name to appear, and M. Sandeau being subject to a like hesitation, not wishing his father to become aware of the pursuit in which he was engaged. A happy suggestion was made by the ingenious editor, which put an end to the dilemma. He recommended Sandeau to chop a piece off his name, and so publish the remainder without fear of recognition. The romance consequently appeared bearing the superscription of ‘*Jules Sand.*’ ‘*Rose et Blanche*’ met with but little success, and, indeed, never came into the sphere of general criticism. A bookseller, however, who was crafty enough to keep one eye open to discover the germs of nascent genius, read the book, and was struck with certain points in it which betokened originality and vigour.

At this period our two companions chanced to be separated for a short time. On parting, they had entered into a mutual arrangement for the composition of another romance, of which each was to supply the half when they met again. On the gentleman’s return to Paris, he was asked for his portion of the work, and was obliged to confess that he had not written a chapter of it. He was much the weaker vessel, this young man. Here is my share, said the lady, bringing

forward a complete work, which she had composed by herself. Now comes our lynx-eyed bookseller upon the scene. He knocks at the door of the little garret, and after passing the threshold, asks for 'the author of "Rose et Blanche," if you please.' 'It is I,' answered Sandau, who was writing at a table. The lady was seated in a corner, colouring flowers; and the bookseller, depositing himself between them, began to enter into conversation on literary topics. He soon convinced himself that the young dame was the object of which he was in search. He praised her work, and suggested that, instead of colouring flowers, she ought to occupy herself exclusively with literature. Her answer to these encouraging counsels was the production, from a drawer, of the complete manuscript of 'Indiana.' He read a page or two, was pleased with the title, and carried the whole away with him, to examine it at his leisure, parting with the fair authoress with the remark that times were bad, and that books were scarcely selling at all—without some general observations of which description it would seem impossible for trade to be carried on. In a few days he returned, and purchased, probably for a very small sum, the wonderful manuscript. In a few weeks every one was asking every one else, 'Have you read Indiana?' Again, there had been a difficulty about the author's name. M. Jules Sandau would have nothing to do with the affair. Some one happening to look in an almanack, found that it was St. George's day. Keep the name Sand, this individual advised, and substitute Georges for Jules. Here we have, at last, the name that has been famous for the last forty years. Without carefully prepared announcements, without any myster-

rious surprises, without a name that was in any way familiar in the literary world, the book had an immediate success. The story occupies itself chiefly with four characters: the Baron Delmare, an old French colonel, who, after retiring from the service, has grown rich, as a merchant in the Isle of Bourbon; his wife, Indiana, a young and ethereal creole, married solely through submission to her father's will; her cousin, Sir Ralph Brown; and Raymon de Ramière, a graceful and corrupt *roué*, an incarnation of brilliant selfishness. After considering its author's antecedents, we can scarcely wonder that the book should hinge upon the question of the institution of marriage. Baron Delmare is a rough and rusty old grumbler, despotic, peevish, and unsympathetic. Indiana is bodily delicate, but full of soul, and suffering intensely from her isolation from love. Sir Ralph is good, kind, and rather quiet, and has entertained an affection for Indiana from the time of her being a child. Raymon appears to Indiana as the ideal being for whom she has been waiting all her life. He fascinates her. She takes his advances seriously; and then, an ecstatic passion having completely got the better of her, she is ready, with the absolute confidence which love engenders, to fly with him—indeed, resolves to do so rather than remain with her husband. In her grand abandonment of self, as the result of her faith in Raymon, and of her inexperience; and in the vivid analysis of the storm as it passes through her soul, lies the great strength of the book. So soon as she discovers his worthlessness, changes too rapid take place in the characters to be quite natural. She recovers serenity as if by magic, while, at the same time, Sir Ralph, who had always been

true to her in spirit, but who was considerably older than herself, bursts forth with all the passionate adoration of a young man. On this latter transformation-scene the great critic, Sainte-Beuve, who reviewed 'Indiana' within a year of its first appearance, is especially severe. Knowing nothing, however, of the actual experience of the author—for at this time her real name, and even her sex, were matters of uncertainty to the Parisian world—he could not be aware of the special reasons for believing in the possible perfection of an old man's love which the stories told to her by her lively grandmother at the Château Nohant must have supplied her with.

In the midst of the success attending the publication of 'Indiana,' the authoress and her old fellow-labourer, Jules Sandeau, separated from each other. In one of Georges Sand's later works there is a touching story told, which evidently bears reference to this separation. We proceed to translate it:—'It matters little to me to grow old; it would be of much importance not to grow old alone: but I have never met the being with whom I could have wished to live and die; or if I have met him, I have not been able to keep him. Listen to a story, and weep. There lived a good artist, whose name was Watelet, who engraved with aqua-fortis better than any man of his time. He loved Marguerite Leconte, and taught her to engrave as well as himself. She left her husband, her property, and her country, in order to go and live with Watelet. The world cursed them; afterwards, as they were poor and modest, they were forgotten. Forty years afterwards there were discovered in the environs of Paris, in a tiny house called Moulin-Joli, an old man who engraved with aqua-fortis, and

an old woman, whom he called his *meunière* (miller's wife—an allusion to the name of the house), and who engraved with aqua-fortis, seated at the same table. The last design which they engraved represented Moulin-Joli, Marguerite's house, with this motto:—

*'Cor valle permute Sabina
Divitias operosiores?'*

It is framed in my bed-room, above a portrait of which no one here has seen the original. For a year, the being who gave me that portrait sat with me every night at a little table, and he lived by the same work as myself. At the rising of day we consulted each other with regard to our work, and we used to sup at the same little table, talking all the while of art, sentiment, and the future. The future has broken its word to us. Pray for me, oh Marguerite Leconte!'

The institution of marriage in France being what it is, we can scarcely wonder at 'a voice from the inner Light-sea and Flame-sea, Nature's and Truth's own heart,' as Carlyle would say, being raised against it in wrath and revolt; nor can we be astonished that a number of women, suddenly finding a fiery interpreter of their smouldering sentiments of injury, should at once crowd around her with acclamations. The French system of marrying and giving in marriage is worked somewhat after this fashion: A man who has led a gay bachelor life, finds himself approaching his fortieth year; and being somewhat weary of frivolity, and disillusioned, besides, of his youthful dreams, he thinks the best thing to do will be to settle down and enlarge his business. So he goes to some lady-friend or professional matchmaker, and, after stating the amount of his means, requests to be furnished with a wife who can command a similar sum for her *dot*. The lady looks

around among her friends. In such or such a seminary there is a young girl waiting until her father can provide her with a suitable *parti*. An introduction is effected between the two gentlemen, and Benedict is invited once to meet the girl in the presence of her friends. Her dowry is proved to be in order. Will she do? Yes; Benedict is satisfied. Then the girl is asked, will he do? She has been in her boarding-school until she is utterly weary of its narrow walls and rigid rules; all her dreams are of the world outside; and she would give anything to escape from tutelage; so she accepts her fate. The marriage is arranged to take place with but small delay; and until the arrival of that auspicious day, the betrothed pair have never met save in the presence of a third party. This is not an exaggerated account of love-making, as practised in Paris. We ourselves have met—under exceptional circumstances, owing to our nationality, but under conditions of most strict propriety—a buxom Cécile, of about seventeen, who was immured in a boarding-school near the Bois-de-Boulogne, and whose dreams were evidently wandering far beyond the scholastic atmosphere in which she found herself. She had, it is true, certain advantages over most of her sex in a similar position; for her guardian, being a count, and one of the chiefs of the Emperor's household, had been enabled to procure her admission, now and then, to the balls given by the Empress. Once, too, he came to the establishment to take her away with him on a more important errand—to be inspected by an eligible candidate for her hand and dowry. Unfortunately, according to the gentleman's views, she 'would not do,' and charming Cécile had to return to her *pen-*

sionnat. This was less than two years ago as we write; and we often wonder what, under conditions so vastly changed, has become of poor Cécile, who was so frivolous and so pretty. We were not favourably impressed with her guardian, who was suffering from some excitement, owing to the presence in the room of an anti-Imperialist novelist and editor of one of the Republican papers. The occasion was a school celebration. Speaking to us of such *canaille*, he said, in English, 'I would strike them with my stick.' Poor fellow! the stick has been since turned the other way.

A few months after the publication of 'Indiana'—some say six, others say only two—appeared 'Valentine.' The institution of marriage was again the point against which the force of the author was directed; but this time the characters were disposed with more skill, and the criticism was carried out with more delicacy and less virulence. Admiration rose to its height. Even critics, *un peu retardataires*—as Sainte-Beuve avows himself—who had deemed 'Indiana' as possibly the isolated cry of an injured woman, who, when she had fumed herself out on the subject of her own experiences, would have nothing left to say, were brought to acknowledge 'Valentine' as the work of a person of true genius, who possessed the key of the human heart.

Now curiosity seized upon the Parisian world, with regard to this newly-risen star, and gossip of all descriptions went abroad. The author was a man, a woman, a blonde, a brunette, a Dantesque virago, an expert at billiards, a smoker of innumerable cigars. Every one had some special information concerning her. An 'interviewer' who was introduced to her presence found, to his surprise,

a pretty, plump woman, dressed in ordinary style; but the smoke of a badly-hidden *cigarito* went up behind the prophetess in little tell-tale clouds. She appears to have cultivated two sides to her character. Among her associates she was plain 'Georges,' and sometimes sported male attire; before the outside world she was decorously dressed, and 'Madame Sand.' When Paris learned that it was indebted to a pretty woman of twenty-seven for the marvellous romances, excitement rose to fanaticism.

Then came 'Lélia,' which was a lyrical and philosophical romance, a cry against moral torpor, half St-Simonian and half Byronic. Loud cries of reprobation were raised against this book, as including passages which contained too great nakedness of avowal; but—we go to steady Sainte-Beuve again!—the elevation of the sentiment rendered even these passages much more chaste than three-quarters of the trivial scenes admired and celebrated by critics in the novels of every day.

Her fourth romance—not counting 'Rose et Blanche,' written in partnership with M. Sandean, and which, indeed, had not come, to any great degree, before the world—was 'Jacques.' This treated of marriage again; but the loud exclamations which, from some quarters, were raised against it, served but to increase Madame Sand's renown. Then came a number of works in rapid succession, one of which was strongly depreciative of man—*male* man, that is to say, and directed, with much power, against his influence. In 1837 Madame Sand engaged in a lawsuit with her husband, with a view to separation and for the recovery of her property, which, owing to his giving up the proceedings at a late stage of the case, she regained entire

possession of. She then spent some time in travel, and, on her return, made the acquaintance of the great Lamennais, who was editing a journal called the 'Monde.' She contributed to his journal, and from himself received a strong influence in the direction of progressive Christianity. In the political and social sphere, too, she found her ideas rapidly developing, until she became a pronounced advocate of advanced social and humanitarian views. Her quitting the domain of poetical and imaginative composition, for works with a pronounced democratic aim, was the signal for a new and more violent outcry against her. She was accused of scandalous and disgraceful immorality, of atheism, of impiety, of desolating doctrines, and savage negations. Her publishers became alarmed at her outspokenness, and she was driven to the establishment of a journal of her own. The first work from her pen, which appeared in this new periodical, the 'Revue Indépendante,' was the romance of 'Consuelo,' which met with an European success. It is one of her longest works, and is probably better known in this country than any other of her very numerous family of romances.

In 1848 we find Madame Sand giving assistance to the provisional government of the newly-established Republic. In addition to the composition of romances, Madame Sand has also turned her attention to dramatic writing. The author of a drama which fell dead in 1830, she met, in 1850, however, with one of the most complete successes that the stage affords.

As the missionary of a new social faith, she is considered by the keen-sighted Mazzini to have fallen away. To us it appears that the stimulus under which she has worked has generally been

one arising rather from a sense of personal pain than from that yearning after justice and right which would actuate the more ideal soul of a Lamennais. The temperament of Madame Sand would appear to be of the uncontrollably emotional order—a nature including, with a passionate ideality, a large element of sensuousness. Mrs. Brownrigg's splendid sonnet, 'A Recognition,' well depicts Georges Sand, and testifies to the enthusiastic sympathy felt for the French authoress by the highest intelligences:—

'True genius, but true woman! dost deny
Thy woman's nature with a manly
scorn;
And break away the gauds and arm-
lets worn
By weaker women in captivity?
Oh, vain denial! that revolted cry
Is sobbed in by a woman's voice
forlorn:—
Thy woman's hair, my sister, all
unshorn
Floats' back dishevelled strength in
agony,
Disproving thy man's name. And
while before
The world thou burnest in poetic fire,
We see thy woman-heart beat ever-
more.

KANT ON THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY.

"O happy February! in which man has least to bear—least pain, least sorrow, least self-reproach!"—*Diary of Immanuel Kant.*

TWELVE gems, the girdle of the year . . .
And every year

A name of joy or grief or fear;
Sometimes a creature sweet and soft,
A cruel demon very oft:
Seventy was wild with battle-thunder—
But what of Seventy-two, men wonder,
A maiden year?

Twelve gems, Ah what, on mere and pond,
Can shine beyond
December's icy diamond?
And the ruby red of June,
Like full-flush'd rose and song-birds' tune!
April beholds the opal vary.
Dim amethyst to February
May well respond.

A happy month. Immanuel Kant,
Hierophant
Of the philosophy dominant,
Because its days are twenty-eight
Welcomes it from the hand of Fate:
Least it contains of loves that languish,
Of dullness, agony, and anguish,
Swindling, and cant.

Metaphysician! I defy
This dreary, dry
Month-preference; and I tell you why.
No stretch of time can be too long
For life's gay laugh and love's sweet song.
Add to each merry month a quarter . . .
My love will only deem it shorter,
And so shall I.

MORTIMER COLLINS.

THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

Festina lente has always appeared to me a capital rule of life; for—to quote another wise saw—‘Things done in a hurry are never well done;’ and, indeed, that can be proved by many ‘modern instances.’

For ages past, and I suppose so it will be for all ages to come, the world has raced after riches—it does so to-day, some winning, many being distanced; but there is no doubt that, after the extreme haste to be rich, the next great curse of European society is the undue haste to be equal. To undertake the foundation of such a social level is very much like assuming the task of rolling out the continent of Europe into one flat plain. The very people who clamour for its performance know this, but that does not stop their noisy demand; and, strange to say, there are clever men who, knowing the truth better than their eager petitioners, are, for purposes of their own, not afraid to promise its execution.

Festina lente—Politicians mine! ye may also be in too great haste to be and keep in power! Power! Office! Yes, it is a wonderful weapon of offence and defence in the hands of a clever leader. A county court will stop the howlings of a ‘devoted friend of the people.’ If Mazzini had been made a minister he would have been as dumb ‘as a drum with a hole in it.’ He is rather like a drum—he makes a noise, but never takes any actual part in the battle.

Kossuth’s sons sensibly took to engineering, and few people now know where that true, but *doctrinaire*, patriot even lives. Garibaldi felt that if he had accepted

a marshal’s baton he should have knocked down his individuality with it. But, à nos moutons, the truth is, and it is my opinion a very unpleasant one, we live in such a high-pressure age that everybody is in one constant hurry-scurry. Life is a bustle; and when we die our ‘remains’ are not suffered to be such, but are at once sent by express train to be buried in a Necropolis.

Look at life—the life of to-day! Formerly a man of business had one occupation, to which of old he drove into the City in a chariot (usually yellow, as of gold), or, if young and ‘fast,’ in a hansom. Now he has a dozen ‘calls on his time’—Banker—Director—Chairman, &c., &c., and perhaps M.P., and is very angry if he cannot step out of his door and dive into a quick train, from which in a quarter of an hour he emerges at his office in Coin Court, E.C., where he finds his clerks and his clients equally in haste.

‘How will you take it?’ snaps cashier.

‘Short as possible,’ replies receiver, who is going to pay it over at once into a company which is to make his fortune in a fortnight. Sometimes, alas! these companies are in a hurry, and collapse in a minute, doing the last stage of the road to ruin considerably under the usual time. Then we *victis!*

Banker junior is in ‘a deuce and all of a hurry,’ for, in addition to his business in the City, he has that other business, his pleasure, at the West-End—Whist at the ‘Harum-Skarum’—or an afternoon party—a dinner—three balls—and then cigars at ‘Cats.’

While even the old head-clerk, who twenty years ago worked *till six o'clock*, and lived at Islington, is calculating to a minute when he can be sure of catching the Brighton capitalists' five o'clock conveyance—fresh fish for dinner travelling with him.

Oh! happy days, when there was no telegraph, and only one delivery, so that you knew your good or bad news with your breakfast. Now the postman's knock is like the incessant rattle of a drum 'beating to arms,' and messages flash even into your very bed. The 'World of fashion'—delightful phrase—which was long supposed to lead a purely 'dolce far niente' life, is now galvanized, and hurries about its occupation in the vulgarest possible flutter. I think it was Cicero, or at least it was one of those ancients, whom

'We hated so, not for their faults but ours,'

and who made our young life a howling wilderness; who said that it was 'unbecoming a gentleman to be seen hurrying in the streets.'

Suppose Il Conte de Cicerone—of course with introductions through his embassy—had been asked to stay the season in London last year, I wonder what he would have said about an aristocrat in a hurry. Would he not have thought of his British contemporary Watts, and sighed to himself over a late breakfast at 'Long's'?

'He never tires nor stops to rest, but onward still he goes.'

Goes onward! I should think he does. He is of the world worldly; —he is in what servants call 'a precious hurry.' Bah! Good Society in a hurry? Impossible! only it is true.

Let us pass a day in London. We will suppose that I am still in the first blush of youth. Hand-

some as Adonis, one of our old-school cronies, and about as well off as Job, a poor relation, whom we met often at morning service at our tutor's. Such being the case, I should naturally have rooms at the 'Clarion,' leave cards, and let society seek me. My grandmother's aunt was a duchess in the days when there were duchesses. Fox had kissed her—perhaps he had had a good night—and been 'in with the deuces.' Sheridan would have made love to her, only he forgot the day and the address; and at any rate we were loose—I mean to say respectable—enough to be received at the virtuous court of the most virtuous and snuffy Queen Charlotte, and have always been in society since; and such being the case, I naturally am asked 'everywhere.'

'Pierre, give me some Seltzer, tell me what's the day of the week, what's o'clock, and what I have got for to-day.'

'Master must know, then, that twelve hours is well striked—*Mardi* is *le jour*—Il Cavallo is at the door—Monsieur is idle today—he only rides in the park with Major Longsword—*Déjeuners* at barracks—Tires pigeons—Lady Blank is at home at the five hours—Milord Sir Graham dines at nine, and then Monsieur has his balls.'

Here the polyglot Pierre, who speaks no known tongue, closes his list.

Now, I will ask any young gentleman about town if that is an *exaggerated state of things*?

I should say that twenty years ago that list of dissipation would have sufficed for a week in any average season. Is London society improved by it? I think not; and as I look at the exhausted faces and weary ways of the 'young entries' of both sexes,

see the consumption of champagne and Seltzer, and *hear* of the boudoir consumption of 'tonics,' I cannot help again saying we are all in too great *haste*, and I believe more truly than ever in the Persian proverb, 'Hurry is the devil.'

From April to August, 'if you are in society,' life is a whirl, it may be, a 'pas de fascination,' for one, or even two seasons; but the pace must tell about the third year—and so, my dear young friend, having flirted violently in London, and, worse, in those 'vicious circles' known to the world as country houses, but which should be called Match-boxes, you find you have hurried through life, and then, from pure exhaustion, you try to refresh yourself by a plunge into the whirlpool of matrimony.

That marriages made in haste—and certainly in these high-pressure days most marriages *à la mode* are so—are not seldom repented of quite as hastily, one has only got to refer to the Divorce Court to see in stern legal black and white.

Not two years ago, being at Covent Garden, I was struck by the good looks and visible happiness of a couple, playing that game which is so old, and yet is ever new.

'A case, Charlie, I suppose,' I said to young Sabretache of the Rapid Hussars.

'Yes! began at Easter down at Dovecote. Awful spoons!'

Last week I was calmly reading my paper by the sunny shore of an Italian lake, wondering why any one ever lives 'in the moral regions of the North,' when I came on the account of the divorce of this 'happy pair,' who had truly got over *their* last stage a good deal under the usual time.

So it is. Florence marries in a hurry to distance Julia, and both are separated 'à mensa et thoro' in six months. Pace too fast again, you observe; but you see this rather puts young gentlemen off the idea of marriage, and has a tendency to make London society not near so fine and proper as the magazine of that name.

While on these social subjects I should just like to say that our indecent haste spoils all our pleasures—even our field sports are affected by it. The turf is spoiled by two-year old scurries.

'I call this racing,' says Captain Rapid, 'it is so soon over. Fancy my grandfather watching his horse, Bobtail by Memnon, over the Beacon course—should as soon think of playing long whist.' 'Whist, allez donc, mon cher,' says his companion, Count Bébè, 'give me baccarat, poof! et tout est fini.'

To shoot you have ground driven for you, and if two loaders are enough you vote it 'rather slow.' Foxhounds are not fast enough, and men take to 'stagging' because 'there's no time lost in that stupid drawing.'

But now I am going to turn to more serious things. The whole of Europe seems to be engaged in a political race, the conditions of which are the upsetting of all existing institutions (for the modern 'word of order' for all parties is, 'whatever is is wrong'), and the prize 'power,' or rather I should say 'office,' for it is best translated by 'portefeuille.' Formerly we had elections to discover our majority, and, it being a majority, was supposed to influence events. That is changed, and the minority rules! It did so in Paris in September 1870, it did so in Brussels in November 1871, and it seems that the *lesser* is fast prevailing over the *greater* in everything in England, and moreover

politicians of all classes seem to be bidding for the support of this minority, which makes up for its smallness of number by its thrusting perseverance and irrepressible self-assertion. The effect of this bidding by both parties for the support of the middle-class Jacquerie is, that we are pledged to reform—that is, to change—every existing rule or regulation. It may be good or it may be bad, but it was established under the hateful rule of well-born ministers—to be sure they may have been clever and well educated—indeed two or three ‘aristocrats’ have been so, but what of that? We are the people, and are discontented with everything, *and will remain so even if all is changed!* Now I am not for a repletion of reform, and I think one generation might have been contented with a Reform Bill and a Corn Law, though there was no occasion for talking of ‘finality,’ as one small man did, a small liberal man too. Yet it is possible to have too much of a good thing. It used to be the boast of England that she had reforms in order to save revolutions; now it appears we are hurrying on reforms in order to create a revolution. Years ago Reform and Free Trade were necessities, and so when the time came they were carried; but then there were men, and, mark you, independent men. Earl Grey and the ‘great Sir Robert’—the man who ‘was sent for from Rome to govern England’—were statesmen among grand politicians, not superior financialists among great merchants. It was genius and intellect, it is now intelligence and study.

We must admit that when our politicians of either side take the matter in hand they stick at nothing, and would change the succession if only enough people would demand it in a London

thoroughfare, provided always and it being enacted that those in power stayed there. But this may be perhaps objected to by some cavillers as a policy more personal than patriotic. Yet, my good reader, we are governed by ‘minorities,’ and what minority is so significant as No. 1? This question then arises, is *alteration necessarily improvement?* ‘Yes,’ cries ‘Out,’ who wishes to be ‘In.’ But what do others say? Emancipation, you know, really brought crushing misery to the freed, and ruin to the heirs of the unpeopled, and so useless property; and Free Trade in France destroyed the growth, or rather the vintage, and export of good wines. ‘Bah! mon cher, anything does to export now,’ said a Burgundian proprietor the other day. But these are minor details, and we all know that nobody out of the Charenton of a new Paris republic would ever dream of a return to the high-priced days of our fathers. But still we might, I think, linger a little on the shore before we plunge headlong into the abyss of reform, and try to find the dead level of society, which you must remember must, to be popular, be levelled downwards. Jack must not only be as good as his masters but rather better now, and quite above him in a few years. *Are all men equal?* I think not, and indeed I know hundreds of people to whose level of intellect, goodness, energy, and industry I should like to attain; but ‘non cuvis contingit.’

On the 4th of September, 1870, I was fighting my way through the disgusting and degraded crowd of the ruffians of Paris, who had just upset a dynasty, with a French diplomatist. A cobbler, with a red flag, came to us, and cried ‘*Vive la Republique!*’ We said, ‘*Vive la France!*’ and went our

way amidst cries of liberty, equality, and fraternity. 'Bah!' said my friend; 'liberty is all very well, so is fraternity, though I will choose my own brothers; but as for equality, *pas si bête*. If that drunken concierge is as good as I am, I am a living error. Why have I wasted ten years at school, college, and in my career?' I agree with my friend. I am not ambitious—not only do I desire to rule nobody, but I am quite content to be ruled; but then I should stipulate to be ruled by a clever, educated man. I do not believe in inspired patriots, neither in Praise God Barebones or Mr. Odger. I detest the idea of a republic in Europe; in America, where there are republicans, and where there is no traditional history (how many dollars would they not give for that patent of nobility?), that system of government is as good as another; but when Dilkes, Odgers, and 'id genus omne' begin crying out for a republic in England, it makes me sick. Blind as owls, they cannot see that they have all that is good in the republican system and none of its evils. Elections for the 'honourable position of President' would simply bring about a civil war. As a rule, every republican has an eye on the presidential chair.

Who should we have first? Would Odger vote for Dilke, or Dilke for Odger? or Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare for Mr. Samuel Morley? Not a bit of it. There would be 'seven Richmonds in the field,' or rather seven St. Giles's in the Fields. I wonder if any of the red republicans of the British back slums have ever lived under an European republic. I have more than once—*moi qui vous écris*, and I can assert fearlessly that such a combination of 'insolence of office,' ignorance of the

very rudiments of rule, and harsh tyranny, I have never before seen. Just look at Paris now. Why, Thiers is, as far as liberty of the person and of the press are concerned, the greatest tyrant France has seen since her fourteenth Louis. Only, under a republic—where the people (always tyrants) have to be consulted and respected, if you will keep power—could such a cold-blooded murder as that of Ferrè and Rossel have been perpetrated, a monarch must have pardoned. I remember once talking to one of the leading revolutionists of Italy; he was, in fact, Major Vecchi, from whose villa at Genoa the famous Marsala expedition started. We were speaking of the Austrian rule in Lombardy and Venetia. 'Ah! amico mio,' he said. 'If you wish to see tyranny live under a republic. Milan *was* bad, and Venice *is*; but if you had, as I have done, suffered from our own people, you would then really understand what is "iron rule." I was in Rome under my friend Mazzini.'

My view of a republic is that Odgers, or Podgers, or Rogers wants to govern me, and I confess I prefer a Stanley, a Gladstone, or a Disraeli.

Show me a republic, and I will show you a war of classes.

Mr. John Bright is a very clever, eloquent man, and fond of fly-fishing, a great point in his favour; but it must be confessed that before he obtained office he did a deal of mischief, and scattered broadcast those seeds of class hatred which I think you will see produce a pretty crop at the next general election. I look forward to that time, and, poor people, I pity you as I should a man in a phaeton with runaway horses, who had given over the reins to his groom. And I hope to be eating figs at Sorrento when you are exer-

cising your right as a citizen to elect your own tyrant. Another point!

My dear Messrs. Gladstone and Co., you are beginning your latest volume of reform by trying to make England as disagreeable, or as 'nice to live out of,' as Ireland. I suppose you do not think that the absenteeism, against which you were so eloquent when Ireland was concerned, is any scourge in England. You try to spoil sport (literally), and destroy that country-house life which is one of the delights of England, and which only exists there and in Hungary. Feeding game is starving patriots. A buck rabbit is looked upon by the Bright school as a roaring lion, seeking 'the industrious classes,' to devour them. Shooting is doomed. I believe hunting is still allowed, though I expect shortly to hear that a sumptuary law has been passed to forbid scarlet coats. But there are counties where you cannot hunt; indeed, there are only four or five where you can; and if our rulers imagine that in these days of education and social refined intercourse a gentleman is going to live on his estate without outdoor amusements, they must indeed know little of the world. True, you will say, he can farm; but, you see, as a rule, a gentleman farmer ruins himself, his parish, and his property.

Cut down the estimates! There, again, you are off at score. But, really, my beloved reformers, England *is* a rich country; a million or two will not hurt her; and I do think you should be just before you are mean. The great object now seems to be to cut down everybody's pay and increase everyone's work. Would it not be as well, in an overwhelmingly rich country like England, to first inquire whether the servants of that

country had ever been properly paid. I maintain that England pays those who serve her worse than any other nation. Begin with her best paid men—her ambassadors. A gentleman is sent to one of the great courts of Europe, where he is expected to keep open house. If he does not the Duke of Dash mentions it at White's, and Captain and Mrs. Tinpot, of the 'West Kent Mounted Marines,' write to the 'Times' to know why they were not asked to dinner—to a ball—and presented to the reigning sovereign. What do Tinpot and his wife pay taxes for, you see? Look at your nearest ambassador. I wonder how far over and above his salary his income has suffered by a chronic condition of international hospitality! As for the men in the 'chancelleries,' they are required to know everything, have frequently great responsibility thrust on them, and they do not get 'pay' enough to supply the tight two-button lavender gloves required for the salon practice of the profession. And then those 'unpaid' *attachés*—nothing a-year, paid quarterly!

Why on earth should England ask her sons to serve her during the best years of their lives merely for the honour of so doing? I met one of them last night at dinner, and I told him he would have saved money and rested his brains if he had stayed at home and shot rabbits in his father's park.

Ah! those poor queen's messengers, too!—the hardest worked and worse paid of civil servants. Britannia might spare a few thousands to these poor devils, who are for ever 'surveying'—very closely, too—the world, from China to Peru, or, at least, from Rome to St. Petersburg.

But the 'F. O.' was always famous!

When, before the Crimean war, D—— W—— took a little trip, from the Bosphorus to Downing Street without stopping—a rapid act, which very few men could have performed—what did they do? They thanked him publicly, and promoted him, of course. Oh no! They said—

'How much?'

'Expenses, 29*l.* 11*s.* 4*d.*'

And the Government nobly (though not without a murmur) presented this gallant servant with 29*l.* 11*s.* 4*d.*!

He never volunteered another such a journey.

Another concession to the minority is the civilization of the Navy and Army! Admiral Freshwater *vice* Admiral Salt, and General Professor Plain Clothes *vice* General Esprit de Corps!

England had always paid those two services with a most radical liberality, officers being practically rather worse off than men; and now our minority wishes to have civil commanders, and, of course, the wish of the minority is law.

I think the normal state of sailors is so dreadful, that we should go down on our knees and return thanks whenever we find an able-bodied seaman 'willing to go afloat'—naval pay is nominal, and promotion is problematic!

Military pay is just enough to exclude from the service any man of talent, unless his father can afford to keep him for the good of his country.

Now it has always seemed to me that sailors and soldiers risk more than any other professional men possibly can do. With the off chance of winning very poor stakes, they play their lives. Now nobody, as a rule, murders a person, and lawyers are only shot in Ireland, but the sailor and soldier play *cartes sur table*, and you, as well as they, know that if they

win they will gain little; if they lose, they lose life. But even want of pay did not keep gentlemen out of the army; they went in, and, when they got a chance, fought! But our rulers have found a way of getting rid of all this stupid pride in the service. They have done away with purchase, and have instituted rigorous (and, let me say, utterly absurd) examinations. The effect must be to keep out all the men who went into the service out of love of adventure (and they made pretty good officers—at least, Arthur Duke of Wellington said so), and will fill our mess-rooms with a lot of 'prigs.' Good boys! great at the integral calculus, possibly; but I fancy I should like more of a man, and less of a scholar, if I was making one of a party of pleasure bent on taking the heights of Alma or returning a Russian visit at Inkerman. I do not suppose when Redan Windham wanted to send for aid he asked his A.D.C. if he was far enough advanced in his education just to step over to head-quarters. Nor do I believe that the misled Earl of Cardigan, as brave a soldier as ever rode, when told to effect an impossibility, halted his men, and made them say the multiplication table.

Of course, no one objects to education in or out of the army, or anywhere else; but passed examinations are no more a sign of education—practically understood—than having learned to do one Chinese puzzle is a proof you are a mathematician.

Of course, if you do not want an army for fighting, you can bring it up as you like; have a body of men of elegant attainments, irreproachable morals, and tea-party manners; but I confess that I do not believe in 'the good boy' school! No! I see an orderly room—the professor-

adjutant, with a cane under his arm, walking between two desks of officers.

'Major Striker' (nine service medals) 'where is Cathay?'

'County Cork; quartered there in '51.'

'Take him down, senior captain,' says Lieutenant and Adjutant Pipeclay; 'and, major, let me hear you say your manual and platoon' without a mistake, at 10 A.M. to-morrow.'

Change the scene, and go among the men.

'Serjeant X——, why are your men so backward in advanced politics? See that Private Y——, No. 1105, has three days' heavy political economy, and is confined to barracks!'

In peace this is no doubt nice. Of course, professors should be colonels, and tutors adjutants; but just, *pour rire*, imagine that you want your soldiers to fight!

I can't fancy campaigning with students, and should prefer a man with a natural taste for 'annexing' poultry, and then grilling it, to the best 'first-class' that ever shunted itself off the Oxford line to his proper level. Nice men for small tea parties, and, no doubt, 'charming, and so clever!' but do not let them ever be officers of mine. Imagine a dreary bivouac, food scarce, drink dry, cigars not plenty, and the colonel saying—

'Let us be amused. Who will recite an ode of Horace, or give us a lecture on the working classes?'

Then, too, I see that our popular ministers are down on the heads of colleges! Fancy the consternation at Oxford and Cambridge.

'Bursar, where did you credit

Mr. Rapid's fine for walking on the grass?'

And some poor bepuzzled don crying out to a fellow—

'I say, old boy, do us this sum, and I'll stand a bottle of 1820 to-night!'

But of Professor Gladstone it may well be said, '*Nihil tetigit quod ornavit!*'—he and his friends, I hear, are now getting up a reform in female dress!

If the present ministers go on as they are doing, there will be little need of sumptuary laws—sack-cloth and ashes will become general wear.

But pray do not think I am against reform. Economy is a very fine thing, and it alone keeps the Gladstone *cum* Dilke party in power; and as that is the main object of England at present, let us cut down and reform everything, till life is as material as a law-suit, and as dull as a Sunday-school; let us put a stop to pleasure; ruin country life; put learned civilians into our war services; get a navy that will not even pretend to float; and an army which fights at home, mathematically; let us, in a word, sacrifice everything to the republican school, and so be practical. But, my good friends, would it not be possible, while passing all these great measures of reform, to enact that they should not come into force till the year 1920? We shall most of us be gone then, and the then existing generation, having no idea what they have lost, will be the contented slaves of the Odgers, the Podgers, and the Rogers of that day.

A POSTPONING REFORMER.

A DREAM OF LEGAL WOMEN.



UNDER THE NEW REGIME.

'MAY I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF A DANCE, MR. SMYTHE?'

I AM a barrister-at-law, or rather, a barrister with a desire to be at law, and my name is painted up in big letters over a door in the Temple, situate some distance above the general level of London house-tops. That name is repeated again in still bigger letters at the foot of my staircase, and to *me* it looks highly attractive; but, alas! it has failed, for many years, to attract in the faintest degree a certain class of gentlemen—gentlemen by statute—whom I would fain have drawn up my six flights. Even Mr. Solomon, the attorney, who was spoken to on my behalf by the friend of my mother's half-uncle, and for whom, in conse-

quence of his promise to look me up, I have entertained, for the last ten years, a kindly feeling, has never yet brightened my doorway.

Every day I hear footsteps ascending my stairs, with shoals of papers for the 'silk' on the first floor, who hasn't time to read them, or for the 'stuff' on the second, who hasn't the capacity to understand them. Nay, once the unmistakable tread came yet higher; and, just as, with eager excitement, I had torn from my shelves several musty old Reports, and opened them in business-like confusion on my table, my clerk looked in to tell me that a brief had been left here for my opposite

neighbour, upon whose door, for several days, the words 'Back in five minutes,' had been posted.

But let no-one imagine that it is from any fault of mine that I have to sing the hymn modern, 'Brief life is *not* my portion.' For three years I annually ate twelve dinners, whereat I twelve times forgot which way the joint passed, and which the wine, and offended my messmates by omitting to nod to them before my first glass, and whereafter the same number of times I, next morning, suffered serious inconvenience from the strength and heat of the Temple sherry (Lamplough's Pyretic Saline was not yet invented). Moreover, I read in a pleader's chambers, with half-a-dozen other aspiring Lord Chancellors; and, whenever we didn't play cricket with 'Bullen's Pleading' and an india-rubber ball, the place resounded with hot arguments on knotty points of law, and sheets of foolscap were covered with such cunning pleadings that, had they gone out uncorrected, they must have ensured for our master a splendid reputation for originality and subtlety.

'Who taught his hand without a flaw
Pleadings and interrogs to draw?
Who taught him all he knew of Law?
His pupils.'

Well, when I had eaten my terms and got my pleader's certificate, I was called to the outer bar, and made the benchers a capital speech in return for the glass of port which they gave me; and though in that speech I did not emulate the eloquence of one of my predecessors, who, by way of making things pleasant, is reported to have said: 'We shall be rising in our profession when you are mouldering in your graves,' I think that I must have impressed the old gentlemen with the modest confidence which I myself then enter-

tained, that the woolsack was for me only a matter of time. Since that day I have been an outer barrister, rushing about to sessions, toiling round circuit, haunting the courts at Westminster with a large notebook in my hand and a dummy brief under my arm, and above all things, 'continually in the Temple' (though not always in a 'blessing' humour), waiting for the friend of the friend of my maternal friend, the wheels of whose chariot have decidedly tarried rather long. So that I may say, in legal phrase, 'all things happened and were done, and all conditions were performed, and all times elapsed, necessary to entitle the plaintiff to be retained by the defendants, A, B, and C: yet the said defendants did not and would not retain the plaintiff, and wholly made default in so doing; whereby the plaintiff was deprived of the profits which he would otherwise have made from such retainer aforesaid, and has been put to great expense in the purchase of a wig and gown and divers law-books, purchased by him for the purpose of such retainer aforesaid, and has suffered great agony of mind, and has been otherwise greatly injured; and the plaintiff claims at least 10,000*l.* a year.'

Now this sketch of what I am and where I am to be found, is not intended for the benefit of those who have so long neglected me; it is simply tendered in explanation of how it was that I, a working barrister, and actually excused from civic burdens on the score of my 'practice,' had a few minutes of leisure the other day, and why it was that the thoughts which passed through my mind (or what I am pleased to call a mind) during those few minutes were mainly 'of the law legal.' Had it not been for the neglect of my natural supporters, my day-dream

would never have come off; had it not been for the nature of my calling, it might have assumed a totally different complexion; in either case this paper would never have been written. 'A good thing too,' says somebody who hates legal 'shop.' Short-sighted and fatuous mortal! The glimpse into the mirror of futurity which was given to me was one which ought to interest not the *legal* world only, but also the world of politicians, the world of philosophers, the world of everybody who are anybodies, and, above all, the best and most inquisitive half of the whole world of humanity, whose forms in that mirror rose so strongly before me; but even if it could interest nobody except myself and my editor (it must interest *him*, or he would not give it a place), I should still feel bound to disburden myself of it in justice to my reputation hereafter as a prophet and dreamer of true dreams. Therefore, without further preamble, I will state how it came about.

There was a thick fog in my chambers. A fog seems always thicker in the Temple than anywhere else, and in my attic than in any other part of the Temple. Perhaps it is that the smoke of my fire thinks itself so near the roof that it won't take the trouble to let itself be seduced up the chimney. Anyhow, it's an atmosphere to which one must be acclimatized before one can thoroughly enjoy it; and only a strong believer in homeopathy could consider it conducive to the clearness of intellect so universal in the learned profession. However, on this particular day there was no escape from it; so, summoning my trusty clerk to shut the shutters, and light up, I sank down into my armchair, with the cleanest-looking law-book I could discover. Alas! cleanliness is only compa-

rative, as any one who has taken a Turkish bath knows. My laundress—my maid-of-all-work, who does *none*, whom I have never seen, but in whose existence I am forced by the evaporation of my sherry to believe—ignores the conception altogether; and therefore I was not surprised to find, after shutting the book twice with a bang, that I was likely to take in as much law at the pores (a funny man would say 'paws') as at the eyes.

It was a volume of legal maxims. 'Maxims,' said I to myself, 'are the condensed good sense of nations.' Somebody else said that before; but all remarks must be first made by some one, and if good they cannot be too often repeated. 'Once get the principles of law into your head, and the practical application of them will soon follow.' So, with an unusual thirst for knowledge, I opened the book.

After pausing at 'Caveat emptor' to think with regret of my fourteen-shilling umbrella, which had unglued itself in its first shower, and wondering, over 'Nullum tempus occurrit regi,' how it was that her Majesty was always so punctual, and whether republics ever thought of looking at their watches, I came to three maxims which particularly struck me, and on which I made the following most important reflections:

I. 'Noscitur a sociis.' That is true. Tell me what attorney a man hugs, and I will tell you what manner of man he is. The habitual defender of criminals is not very unlike the habitual criminal; but his resemblance to the man he more immediately embraces is still more striking. *Apropos* of 'hugging,' if only the 'ladies of creation,' in their struggle to be doctors, churchwardens, school-boarders, stump-orators, &c., would devote a little energy to the task of be-

coming attorneys, it would be a much easier operation. Perhaps that will come some day. When it does, I shall have much pleasure in being a 'bird of a feather,' and flocking together with other gentle birds, who may feather my nest for me.

II. 'Equitas sequitur legem.' That *may* be true. I had always understood that the two systems were sadly contradictory, and stood in need of a Lord Chancellor's interference to confuse—I beg his pardon—fuse them; but I suppose that I am wrong; and it is a satisfaction to me to know that Equity, for which I always had a low opinion, is obliged to trail its weary course in the rear of the law; and it is really very kind of the latter sometimes to give a glance of pity and contempt behind, as, from the motto, 'Lex respicit aquitatem,' I see that she does. By-the-by, if Law is a female, why shouldn't the bench and the bar be feminine also?

III. 'Interest Rei-publicæ ut sit finis litium.' That *cannot* be true. What! Is it the essence of national good sense that there should be no more declarations, pleas, replications, rejoinders, rebutters, or surrebutters to draw, no more witnesses to turn inside out, or fees to pocket; no more wool-sacks to be competed for? And that good old institution, trial by jury, the palladium of English liberty! How could English liberty get on without its palladium? Perish the thought! We Londoners, at any rate, have no idea of practising such a theory. Why, at this moment we are making preparations for litigation on a grander scale than the world has yet seen; and when the new Law Courts shall have been erected. . . . Here the book and my eyes closed sympathetically, and I saw a vision.

* * * * *

It is the year 1970. Women have gained their rights, law and equity have been fused, and the Palace of Justice has been built. Many other things have been done, but from a legal point of view these are the chief ones.

I stand on January the first upon the steps of a gigantic pile in a neighbourhood which I can hardly recognize. A building which unites the chief features of many styles of architecture, and which bears upon it the impress of the diverse taste of successive First Commissioners of Works and of the economy of several Chancellors of the Exchequer, stretches its huge form between the sister—now no longer rival—Inns of Court. The weather is sultry, for the Gulf-stream has effected an extraordinary change in the English climate; and if the air in patches is black, it is not with smoke—which since the invention of a smokeless combustible have long since disappeared from the faces of society—but with the ordinary traffic of the metropolis, which is now almost entirely conducted in aerial machines. I look up at the monster balloons with their cargoes of merchants for the City—receiving every now and then a fresh passenger, shot up into the car from the ground in a manner which I had once seen practised by a little lady at an amphitheatre, or swooping down to earth to drop into nets the old and timid ladies, who had not yet learnt how by means of three somersaults to light safely on their feet. There, too, are private balloons in gay colours, and parachutes—the handsome of the air—with engaged couples flirting in them, or strong-minded men out shopping without chaperons. But most numerous of all are the sturdy matrons, who prefer to take their consti-

tutional fly from Tichburnia—the centre of London fashion, out somewhere beyond Putney—to the offices, in which they work all day for their husbands and little ones at home. Occasionally one of these last, oppressed by the heat and the exertion of flapping, pauses to sit down upon the spire of a steeple, where the weathercock (for there still are weathercocks) forms an agreeable fan, as it flaps to and fro; and I observe an elderly lady, evidently a spiritualist, who by sheer force of will has succeeded in persuading her forgotten parasol to follow her through the air with a much more graceful motion than ever table displayed under Mr. Home's hands.

Meanwhile up the marble steps, whereon I stand, is pouring a throng of strangely-clad beings, who make me wonder whether we have gone back to the age at which, according to Mr. Darwin, there were no distinctions of sex. Certainly the dress of all is much the same, more simple than becoming, and not unlike what I myself used to wear as a boy some half a century ago. The only difference which I can see is that, whereas those whom I imagine to be of my own sex grow long hair and appear to have nothing to do except to carry babies and look generally effeminate, the other—I cannot say the *fair*—sex, whose figures give me a funeral reminiscence of the heroes of obsolete burlesque, seem to have no time for anything; some of them are running as fast as if they were jury-women with visions of fines before their eyes; others of more distinguished appearance, with little black brief-bags in their hands, are nodding gracefully to what I must take to be solicitresses, who sometimes hand them bundles of papers and sometimes button-hole

them to mutter instructions on the conduct of their cases.

It is evident to me that I am in an age of progress, if I never was in one before. To think that the removal of Temple Bar, and the consequent possibility of driving six legislative coaches abreast into the City should have effected such a change in the institutions of my country! Law business conducted by *ladies* on New Year's day! No distinctions of Terms, doubtless, but litigation going on all the year round! What a glorious prospect for the bar! Why, if only I hadn't the misfortune to be of the weaker sex, I must have had an opening now; though of course a competitive examination would tax one more than a Temple dinner, unless one had brains naturally adapted for jumbling up different branches of law. I had a maiden aunt of a most powerful intellect, and I remember that she was more than a match for me; when I came home from school, she used to collar me, and ask me, 'Who was Solon?' and 'What was Magna Charta?' and other questions of an equally searching character, which she had to answer herself. *She* was certainly a very superior person; so, perhaps, women *generally* are superior to us manly creatures, and it is a privilege to see them in their proper position above us.

'Here, you news-girl, a paper?'—'What? half-a-Republic! I never heard of such a coin. Take my watch; it's a guinea platinum, and has never gone since the siege of Paris.' And I rush with the 'Hourly News' up to the vast portals of the Hall of Justice—mindful of those old days when I used to while away the hours in court with some such improving literature, at the risk of being called to silence by the

usher whenever I tried to turn back the sheet in a noiseless and unostentatious manner.

I will not attempt to describe the sight which met my eyes, as I stood gazing into the central hall of the Palace. Twice the swing-door banged against me, but made no impression. Perhaps I should be standing there now, had not a shrill voice issuing from under a policeman's helmet suggested to me in the forcible slang of the period that I had better 'move on.' Now, though I never can see why in a free country one *should* move on unless one feels so inclined, there are many things one would rather do than bandy words with a female guardian of the peace; and so submissively I walked on and in through the nearest door, over which was written the name of 'Court of President's Bench.'

The audience part of the court was crowded with jurywomen in waiting and men who had come there either from curiosity or for the coolness of the air. Their appearance did not strike me as illustrative of any advance in the art of washing; and even the new system of ventilation, which had been introduced after the suffocation of several judges, and which almost whirled the hair off my head, did not prevent me from recognizing an ungrateful odour—well known to me of old in such places. The bar, too, was well represented; for the juniors, who were always rushing about in search of an excitement, thought that they had discovered one in the case, which was now being tried before Mrs. Justice Snapper. That lady was of a somewhat severe aspect, and, as she glared down through her spectacles upon the court, there were few in it who would like to have tackled her in a contest of words. Her

knowledge of law was very great, and it was easy to profit by it, for she screamed it forth in a shrill manner, which overbore all resistance on the part of the counsel engaged in the case. The action was brought by a young man in poor circumstances against an heiress for cruelly and fraudulently allowing him to entertain the false expectation that she would marry him—an equitable extension of the old Breach of Promise case, carried through the House of Commons by the first deceased wife's sister who had obtained admission there. There was a further count for 'making eyes' at the plaintiff, to which it was specially pleaded for the defence that 'the said eyes were not the eyes of the defendant, as alleged.' The sympathies of the court were manifestly with the plaintiff; indeed, when the counsel on the opposite side tried to put a few questions in cross-examination tending to discredit him, the ladies of the jury hissed so vehemently that she was obliged to sit down without effecting her vile purpose. It was in vain that the defendant was called to prove that her intentions were honourable, but not matrimonial—that she ignored the custom of 'making eyes' as it was sworn to by three female experts—and that at most she could only make one eye, inasmuch as her other one was of glass, and immovable (upon which the judge offered to allow any necessary amendment in the form of the second count); the fact that she was not (barring the eye) ill-looking only aggravated the case in those of the jury; and when the counsel for the plaintiff sat down after a reply, which melted to tears every one in court except myself and the crabbed old justice, the forewoman of the jury informed the

latter that they would not be summed up to by her, as they had all made up their minds. Hereupon the lady grew very red in the face, and threatened to commit the jury, fine the High Sheriff, and clear the court; at which the enlightened twelve snapped their fingers and made other unmistakable signs of contempt; and the hubbub, which was now taken up by the Bar and spectators, became so furious, that I was fain to rush out of court in search of some more peaceful resting-place.

I found it in the next court, into which I entered. There a genial old Baroness of the Exchequer was sitting, with Equity jurisdiction, to hear an application for an injunction to restrain a lady from killing pigs under another lady's windows. The judge was as sharp as a needle, and extricated the facts of the case in five minutes out of the confusion in which the counsel on both sides had involved them; and every now and then she made some quaint little joke in an abrupt way, which set every one in court laughing—and herself among the number. It seemed to me, however, that her knowledge of literature was not so extensive as her knowledge of law; for when Shakespeare was quoted to illustrate something in the case—which it did not illustrate particularly—she said, suddenly, 'Who's Shakespeare? I never heard of the woman.' At length the arguments on both sides came to an end; and the judge, turning towards the jury-box, said, hastily, 'Ladies, the woman killed the pigs. Consider your verdict.' Whereupon, being reminded that she was sitting as an Equity judge, she delivered a judgment to this effect: 'This is the case of a pig. If it had been a horse, it would

have been another thing; for a horse is a noble animal. But if a woman mayn't kill her own pigs, what may a woman do? Take a rule.' And she jumped up, and rolled out of court to inquire what horse had won the Diddlesbury Steeple-chase.

Pondering much on the admirable way in which justice was being administered, I stumbled into a third court, in which a learned—*very* learned—judge was summing up a right of smell case to a bewildered jury. He was expending a vast amount of erudition over an action brought against a perfumer for removing his shop from the neighbourhood of the plaintiff, who had acquired a strong taste for the scents emanating from it, and called medical witnesses to prove that he could not live without them. In hopes that, when all the quotations from the dead languages had been exhausted, something more lively might follow, I buried my head in my paper and tried not to listen. I endeavoured to interest myself in the account of how Mrs. Brightstone had succeeded in carrying a measure for the disestablishment of the Langham Hotel, with due regard to the interests of those who were dining there at the time, and how The O'Rowdy, on being called to order by the Speaker for calling the Chancelloress of the Exchequer a low wretch, brandished the mace round her head with as much ease as if it had been a shillelagh; but all in vain. That pompous drone still penetrated my ears, and I heard suggestions of a smell being an 'incorporeal tenement,' a 'profit à prendre,' not an 'easement,' 'appurtenant' not 'in gross,' and of smelling 'uninterruptedly and of right'—terms which revived in my memory no pleasant recollections of my early researches. But the only distinct information which

I gathered from his ruling was that if the defendant had come out and pulled the plaintiff's nose any time within the last twenty years, the latter could not have prescribed his right; and so I left this subtle point to the jury, who began about this time to use their own smelling-bottles freely.

I looked next into the criminal court, where I saw a ruffianly-looking fellow on his trial for murder. There could be no doubt that his hand had struck the fatal blow, and, though I gathered from the evidence that the use of the knife was permitted in public-house brawls within reasonable limits, on this occasion the prisoner had gone a little too far. Of course, since the abolition of capital punishment, the worst he could expect would be incarceration for a period, where his life would be made as pleasant as modern comforts could make it. But I could see that his counsel expected to get him off altogether, which he did most triumphantly by proving that he was a married man, and that at least one of his wives was present on the jovial occasion. This was an extension of the principle which had elicited so much applause in the leading case of the Queen *v.* Tarpey, the only doubt in this instance being whether the prisoner had surrendered his freedom before or after the murder; but this doubt was entirely removed when a female witness, specially summoned for the defence, was enabled upon oath to deny the statement of six male witnesses, and to fix the tying up of the poor man's hands half an hour before the slight unpleasantness arose. Upon this the judge—the first one, by-the-by, who had spoken the English language as it used to be spoken in my time—felt bound to tell the jury that there was a *prima facie* presumption

of coercion on the part of the wife, which, if unrebutted, would entitle the prisoner to an acquittal, and the jury felt bound to acquit him amid cheers, which resounded on all sides.

This was so satisfactory that I thought I might go elsewhere; so, passing through a court in which equity seemed to be the order of the day, where shareholders and creditors were disputing over the carcase of a joint-stock company, long defunct, before a Mistress of the Rolls, who listened with closed eyes, I came to a door above which was inscribed the imposing title of 'Supreme High Court of Appeal.' 'Here,' thought I, 'at last shall my soul be satisfied with the sight of a complete and harmonious fusion of law and equity;' and, with the feeling of awe which such a tribunal ought to excite, I noiselessly moved into the presence of the highest judges of the land. There they sat in their awful majesty, some half a dozen old women more remarkable for wisdom than beauty. Their majesty was rather impaired by the fact that they were bald and wore no wigs, such useless adornments having been discontinued ever since a learned judge, on a hot summer assize, had tossed hers to her marshal, exclaiming, 'Ladies, it's too warm for wigs,' whereupon the bar had discarded them for ever. This change, though doubtless a salutary one, told rather upon such members of the learned profession as the one who was addressing the court when I entered, upon whose head nothing like a hair was anywhere apparent. She was a very respectable-looking lady, nevertheless, with an air of wisdom and gravity which would have imposed upon anybody; and she formed a complete contrast to the counsel on the other side, an equally distinguished lady, who was the tallest

and handsomest woman at the bar, and had a light jaunty way of doing things which was very fascinating.

The amalgamation of the different branches of jurisprudence seemed very complete. 'It seems to me, Mrs. Attorney,' said the Lady Chancellor (who both in fact and in law seemed to be rather an old woman), 'that your best remedy is by filing a bill and administering interrogatories. To *my* mind there is nothing like interrogatories for eliciting the truth, and, should they establish the facts of the libel in question, the court would then grant you a mandamus to compel the defendant to eat his words.' At these remarks I observed that several of the judges looked rather contemptuous, and the Lady Chief Justice, who seemed rather a peppery old lady, thought it a good opportunity for pronouncing a very fine panegyric on trial by jury. Issue joined, cross-examination of witnesses, and the final verdict of twelve enlightened *English* jurywomen (she prudently omitted all allusion to the sister island) were, in *her* view, the only methods by which justice could be attained. As to the value of filing a bill and twisting its paragraphs into questions ending each with 'how otherwise?' (e. g., 'are you weatherwise or otherwise, or if not, why not, and how otherwise?'), she evidently differed from her learned sister; and, the more to testify this difference, she turned her back upon her during the rest of the argument.

The Lady Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, who had interrupted the counsel a good deal, and been a good deal snubbed by them for so doing, thought that this was clearly a case for arbitration; but as she generally referred cases whenever she could—her only great instance of failure in

that course being a case which had lasted for ten years, and in which she had survived every one connected with it (the last juror had died without giving his verdict, from the effects of her summing up to him day by day for over nine months)—her suggestion was not adopted, though it gave rise to much whispering and gesticulation between the counsel and their clients. So the arguments proceeded, and very slowly they did proceed, for the Lady Chief Baroness was anxious to advance 'by steps,' and, as she constantly requested a repetition of all the facts from the beginning, those steps were not very expeditious ones. The Chief Judge of the Admiralty Court thought that a proceeding *in rem* ought to be adopted, if only the defendant possessed a ship or even the smallest boat; but the Judge of the Central Criminal Court was of opinion that, in the interests of the public as well as of the libelled party, a criminal indictment ought to be drawn and a jury of matrons sworn to try the offence.

At length, after much more discussion, a bright thought struck the junior judge upon the bench, a young woman from the country, who had served her two years as Judge of the High Central Court of Lancashire (where all the proceedings were conducted in Welsh), and had now come to give the benefit of her rural experience to her learned sisters in London. 'Why should not the plaintiff try each of the courses suggested in turn? If he did so, it was highly probable that he would succeed in one or two of them.' Upon this rose the junior counsel for the defendant, and endeavoured to explain to the learned judge that it was a principle of English law that no one should be twice badgered for the same cause.

His argument was rather interrupted by the proceedings of the judges, who seemed to be all knocking their heads together and doing anything rather than listen to him. The 'nemo debet bis vexari' having made so little impression, the learned counsel called for some elementary text-book, and, handing it up to the bench, called attention in a loud voice to the maxim, 'Interest Reipublicae ut sit finis litium.'

Suddenly a thunderbolt seemed to have fallen upon the court. Up rose the bar as a woman, looking as if they would gladly tear the unfortunate junior's eyes out; up rose the judges with the wrath of offended dignity upon their countenances; and the Lady Chief Justice, seizing the volume of reference, hurled it, as Juno (if her august husband allowed her) might hurl a bolt, at the head of the offender. It shot briskly past his ear, and landed with a tremendous bump upon the desk where I sat. . . . *

'Did you call, sir?' said my clerk, as, hearing the book fall, he

put his head in at my door. The candles were burnt out, and the evening sun was struggling to force a way through my closed shutters. I saw with a feeling of relief that my valued retainer had not yet ceded his post to his wife or his mother-in-law. I heard the old horn still summon students to qualify by feeding: I did *not* hear the foot of any attorney at my door. When I looked out of my window towards Carey Street, I could see no trace of a Palace of Justice; and a gust of cold wind, which deposited a black upon my nose, gave me assurance that fires still smoked, and that the Gulf-stream was much as usual.

But I could not return to work that day; and, though since then I have nearly resumed my old attitude of expectant inaction, I never see my maiden aunt without a shudder; and I have serious thoughts of migrating to the bar at Constantinople or Hong Kong, or some place where feminine rights are in a less advanced stage than here, and where there may be less chance of my living to see realised my 'Dream of Legal Women.'



NOBODY'S DARLING.

LITTLE and pallid, and poor and shy,
 With a downcast look in her soft grey eye ;
 No scornful toss of a queenly head,
 But a drooping bend of the neck instead ;
 No ringing laugh, and no dancing feet,
 No subtle wiles, and abandon sweet,
 No jewels costly, no garments fine—
 She is Nobody's Darling—but mine !

No 'Dolly Varden' coquettish airs ;
 No high-heeled boots to throw her down stairs ;
 No yachting jacket and nautical style,
 With a sailor's hat that she calls her '*tile*.'
 But 'Lady' is stamped on her quiet brow ;
 And she crept in my heart I can't tell how :
 Not made to dazzle—not born to shine—
 Nobody's—nobody's Darling—but mine !

No saucy ravishing girlish grace,
 But a settled calm on the sweet pale face ;
 No sparkling chatter and repartee ;
 Very silent and still is she.
 White and still is my pearl of pearls,
 Yet to me she seemeth the queen of girls ;
Why I love her I can't define,
 For she's Nobody's—nobody's Darling—but mine !

Were riches hers, or a beauty rare,
 She would lose her charm, and become less fair :
 Werē rings to shine on those fingers small,
 They could not add to their grace at all :
 She would learn to smile and to speak by rule,
 In the foolish book of Dame Fashion's school ;
 And the world to spoil her would soon combine ;
 Now she's Nobody's Darling—but mine !

The day has come when the cooing dove
 Croons to his mate a song of love,
 When Nature stirs, and the copses ring,
 In all the joyance of dawning Spring.
 The day has come when I dare to speak,
 To watch the blush on the once pale cheek ;
 To whisper low on Saint Valentine,
 'Darling ! Nobody's Darling but mine !'

AUSTYN GRAHAM.



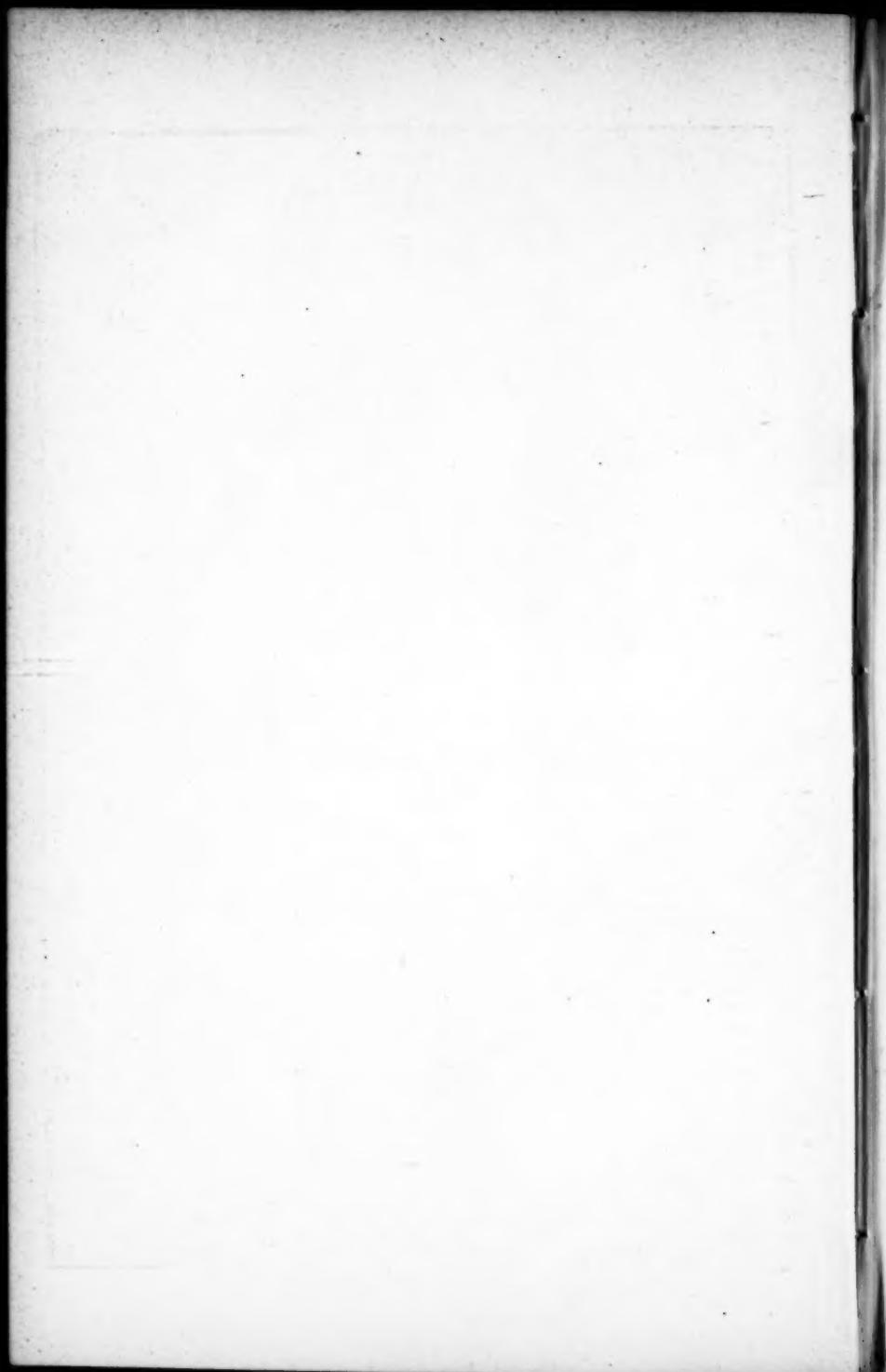
Drawn by G. Cruikshank, Jr.]

'ST. VALENTINE' AS IT IS.



Drawn by G. Cruikshank, Jr.]

'ST. VALENTINE' AS IT OUGHT TO BE.



PEN AND PENCIL NOTES.

BY BLANKO BROWN.

CHRISTMAS-TIME AT THE THEATRES.



WHEN these notes appear, the tinsel will have become slightly dull, the muslins will show signs of wear and tear to the manager's eye, the tricks and transformations will work almost too easily, the orchestra (alas! poor musicians!) will be playing the pantomime music mechanically, alternating between a run on the strings, and a strong demand on the brass; while the manager will be either congratulating himself upon his peculiar cleverness in commanding a success, or anathematizing the luck which has repaid all his outlay with a beggarly account of empty boxes. The smaller houses will be arranging for their Easter novelties, which will probably be, within another month, announced at the bottom of the bill as 'in active preparation.' No better time than the present offers itself for a general review.

VOL. XXI.—NO. CXXII.

To commence with Drury Lane. 'What was the Drury Lane pantomime like this year?' 'I hear, Mr. Brown, that it was a great success?' 'I hope, ma'am, for the manager's sake, that it was. I will own to you that I did not care for it. I was not amused by "Tom Thumb." I did not laugh: I was bored.' 'My dear Blanko,' says my host, 'do you expect at your age——?' 'My age!' I exclaim, with a side-glance at the lady of the house, to impress upon her that my friend—my *old* friend, her husband, is having his joke with me; but he continues: 'do you expect to be amused by big heads, clowns, and red-hot pokers?' 'Yes, I do. I have a sweet tooth still, a liking for preserves, which is a sign of juvenility, and of a good heart; and a pantomime, now, if really good, is to me as mirth-provoking as it was when I first saw——'

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Here I stop. When I get upon what 'I first saw' in the way of pantomimes, I make a rule, if young ladies are present, of always pulling myself up short. Yet, among play-going bachelors and elderly married men, I am rather proud of what I *have* seen, and can refer to authorities of such acknowledged standing in pantomime matters, as leads my hearers to question me about the early days of Grimaldi, and to beg for information as to the date of the first introduction of the red-hot poker into British pantomime. This by the way. The subject before us now is 'Tom Thumb,' at Drury Lane, this year, and why I was not ravished with delight by it. Am I alone in this? Decidedly not. My young nephews and nieces were wearied by it. The youngest child cried at some portions, especially at the accidents that befel Master Thumb, who was cruelly used by a disgusting giant, a huge bird, and a cow; but the little girl takes after her uncle, being tender-hearted and easily moved to tears by the sorrows of others. Yet (so complex is our nature) I do not remember ever weeping at the various unmerited injuries heaped upon the feeble Pantaloons by his unprincipled companion. With unmoistened eye have I witnessed Harlequin torn to shreds and rammed piecemeal down a cannon, to be mended by being fired out of it again. I have not hid my face in my pockethandkerchief when the Clown banged the baby's head upon the stage, previous to using the poor infant as a weapon in an affray with the comparatively powerless arm of the law, represented by a policeman with a very red nose. No; at these things in my time I have laughed, and will again—if the opening scenes of the pantomime do not send me into a fitful slum-

ber. On the other hand, if I was bored, and my young friends wept, there were hundreds in the grand old house delighted with everything, and so you see, as the showman used to say (as perhaps he does now): 'Different people, mum, has different hopinions.' Was the scenery effective at Drury Lane? I think not. There were groups of Watteau figures, and there were figures piled up one above another, and there was tin-foil, and red-fire, and a tawdry glare and glitter; but as for painting, as for scenic art—well, all I can say is that, having expected much, I was disappointed. The 'Vokes family' was actively funny; but all they had to do, I had seen them do before, as had every visitor to the Drury Lane pantomime of the previous year. As for the 'comic scenes'—there was the scene representing 'furnished apartments,' and this, I fancy, I *must* have seen before. I speak in sarcastic sadness. Is there really nothing new for pantomimists to seize hold of? Surely a sharp Clown, passing through the crowded streets a few times in the course of the year, ought to be able to pick up *some* new 'business'—ought to be able to hit upon *some* fresh piece of practical fun! Is it owing to all political allusions having been eliminated from this year's pantomimes that they are so devoid of fun? Perhaps it is. Perhaps there are any number of match-boxes, with 'Lowe' written on them, made to go off suddenly, and end in smoke, which are lying ingloriously in the property-rooms of our pantomime theatres. Cardwell trying to move three soldiers and a drummer, and signally failing; Mr. Bruce and the Licensing Bill (scene, a public-house, with Bung bonneting a policeman); Mr. Scott Russell introducing a peer to a working-

man ; and, finally, three lords, with the Clown and Pantaloons, refusing to move on, and the Harlequin suddenly striking the box on which they are sitting, up springs a board labelled 'Royal Warrant,' pop go rockets and fireworks, and Clown and Pantaloons and the lords are all blown into the air—all these, and many more, have doubtless been made, at much cost and ingenuity, only to be consigned, at the nod of authority, to the theatrical lumber room. Perhaps this is the true reason why we were cheated out of our laughter this Christmas time. Mr. W. Bodham Donne, however, has protested that *he* at all events has not received any special instructions with regard to political allusions in the pantomimes this year. And Mr. Donne *ought* to know, as *he* is the 'party of action' in the Lord Chamberlain's office.

The Covent Garden pantomime is a thing to be seen, not perhaps to be listened to, but certainly to be seen. The lines may be excellent, and the piece may be full of epigram, only they are lost in such a house as Covent Garden, where the best and worst puns, the neatest writing, and the funniest rhymes must yield to practical stage business and spectacular effect. But the sight at Covent Garden is the Amazonian Camp. Here the ballet and 'extra ladies' (as I believe those external to the ballet are termed) muster some two hundred and fifty strong, in burnished armour, brilliant to behold. Then at Covent Garden there *is* scenery. There are groupings of fairies, but these are subservient to the scenic painter's art. And if there be but a modicum of fun in the opening, there is food for laughter out of very old material in the Shadow pantomime. How Mr. Gladstone might have trembled over this if it had been

political. The Clown takes a pitchfork, and with a good heave sends every one up into the air, right out of sight. Why did not the Lord Chamberlain seize the opportunity and order the republican baronet to be pitchforked into space with Mr. Odger, amid the roars of the populace? But nothing of the sort was attempted, and harmless orange-women, simple Pantaloons, innocent bakers, and truculent policemen, were the Clown's victims.

Astley's has won the palm this year as a children's pantomime, and yet the subject, Lady Godiva, doesn't sound like a story known to the holiday youngsters. Clerks went there from the City winking to one another slyly, and expecting to see a tableau vivant with which Viscount Sidney, G.C.B. (or 'General Controller of Ballet') would very soon interfere. Not a bit of it. Those who went to do the fast thing remained to be edified, as far as possible, by the graceful bearing and modest demeanour of Miss Sheridan (Lady Godiva), under somewhat trying circumstances. There is a capital children's scene here: the autumn manœuvres again performed by a corps of 'children in arms,' which joke is probably in the bill. They sing the National Anthem and the Prince's Hymn. This 'halloing and singing of anthems' has been overdone, so that it did not surprise your loyal contributor, Blanks Brown, that these airs should be received coldly by an overcrowded, and otherwise warm, audience. The transformation scene was very effective.

The Princess's pantomime did not amuse me; perchance I had been dragged away from the social board to see it, or perhaps I wasn't in my usually imperturbable temper; for I only said, 'I am aweary, I am aweary,' and fun cometh not,

I said. I was, however, told by competent authorities (the nephews and nieces aforesaid) that of 'Little Dicky Dilver,' which is the name of this 'mime,' they had formed a very high opinion.

The scenery, both here and at the Adelphi, where a burlesque is played with Mrs. John Wood in the principal part, is very good.

No round of Christmas amusements can be complete without a visit to the Grecian pantomime in the City Road. If you would treat children to this, take a hint from yours truly, Blanko, and either 'don't treat 'em,' or, if you will be obstinate, take a private box, don't go too early, so as to avoid the crush, don't choose a Saturday night for the same reason, and for the same reason leave before it is over. Mr. George Conquest and Master Conquest are marvellous gymnasts, and Mr. George can play, too, such lines of character as are embodied in A Demon Imp. Hence the Hunter, Yellow Dwarf, King Frog in burlesques and openings of pantomimes. His first appearance as Zig Zag, when he is hewn out of stone and gradually comes to life, is almost awful, and it is not until he has discarded his ingeniously hideous mask and donned a brighter costume that he begins to be funny.

The late F. Robson alternated between grim humour and grotesque fun in all his burlesque impersonations, and Mr. Conquest seems to have taken Robson's 'Yellow Dwarf' as his model.

By the way, the selection of music in this pantomime is excellent. Permit me to complain. Is there a dearth of melodies and tunes? Wherever I go at Christmas I hear the same airs. At Drury Lane, at Covent Garden, at the Adelphi, at Astley's, at the Princess's, all the same, until I am tired of them one and all; but

at the Grecian there is a choice of several tunes not to be found at the West End; notably one to which the entire house chorussed.

To turn to burlesque at the West End, 'Isaac of York,' at the little Court Theatre, in Sloane Square, goes along briskly, with Mr. Righton as the Jew Isaac, and Miss Oliver as Rebecca. Of course it has all been done before, but perhaps this is in its favour. Most of us remember 'Ivanhoe' at the Haymarket, with Mrs. Keeley as the Knight, Buckstone as Wamba, and Keeley as the Jew Isaac, with 'Clo, Clo,' in a parody on 'Com' é gentil.' I do not recognise the author's name, but if this is his first work in this line, he may shake hands with himself on the result. Mdlle. d'Anka's song of 'Looking Back,' by Mr. Sullivan (composer of the 'Prodigal Son,' 'The Tempest,' and other light pieces of that sort), suddenly introduced, neck and crop, into the piece, has about as much to do with the plot, as would your contributor have, if he were to step upon that stage, and commence a lecture on the occultation of Saturn. However, Mdlle. D'Anka is a handsome lady, and—

'Beauty draws us with a single air.'

'Arion,' at the Strand, is Mr. Burnand's burlesque on the well-known classical story. Your contributor calls to mind this same author's 'Ixion,' with Miss Ada Cavendish's first appearance as Venus, also one Mr. Rogers as Minerva, and all the town to see the piece—and 'Black-Eye'd Susan,' with Miss Oliver, Mr. Dewar as Captain Crosstree, and Mr. Danvers as the saltatory old lady—and sees in 'Arion' as good material for the actors' use as was in either of the above-mentioned pieces. The demand for practical fun is certainly the one to which

a writer of modern burlesque is expected to pay peculiar attention, and the author has not failed in this respect. Here are some good tunes culled from Offenbach, from street organs, and from music halls,

and the costumes are brilliant and original. The second scene, where the showmen sing one of Offenbach's best duets, is, taken altogether, one of the funniest that has been seen—even on the Strand



AT THE STRAND THEATRE.

stage—since the days of 'Aladdin, the Wonderful Scamp.' Messrs. Terry and Paulton are highly to be commended in this scene, and indeed throughout. Miss Rosina Rance plays her part charmingly; and if all actresses would give the public such ladylike, and yet spirited, rendering of burlesque characters, the charge of vulgarity brought against this sort of entertainment would be dropped.

'Pygmalion,' at the Haymarket, has been running some time, and is likely to remain on the bills until the return of Mr. Sothern from America. This piece Mr. Gilbert styles a 'Mythological Comedy,' though it has more the character of an unmusical ex-

travaganza, using that term in the sense in which it was applied, in former times, to farcical pieces written in prose. An audience is easily impressed by blank verse, even though its matter be the merest prosing. Few people can distinguish between good and bad poetry, and were nonsense verses read, *ora rotundo*, to the majority, as being some new work of Tennyson's, they would probably accept the statement, and be so entirely imposed upon as to pronounce a highly laudatory verdict upon the trash. Some cooks possess the art of so disguising a rabbit, that even the very elect themselves would be nearly deceived into pronouncing it a hare. This is

partly the case with 'Pygmalion.' Its blank verse dialogue would be a successful substitute for true poetry, and, as such, would go far towards imposing even upon some critical ears, but for its sudden lapse, every now and then, into the prose of ordinary farce.

Then as to the costumes in this mythological comedy: Mr. Howe, who plays the Greek Leucippe (by the way, why a Greek should be called Leucippe, it is difficult to conjecture, unless the author wished subtly to hint at something feminine in his character,



AT THE HAYMARKET THEATRE.

which is not apparent in the piece), is dressed as a *Roman* soldier, and is not unlike Leech's *Julius Caesar* in the 'Comic History of Rome.' Miss Hill as Cynisca, the sculptor's shrewish wife, appears in the costume of an Egyptian dancing girl! As for poor Pygmalion himself he is almost a nonentity, and might have been quite, had it not been played by Mr. Kendal, whose clever wife (known in her profession as Miss Robertson) represents the living statue Galataea, admirably. In fact Miss Robertson is successful, and therefore the piece is success-

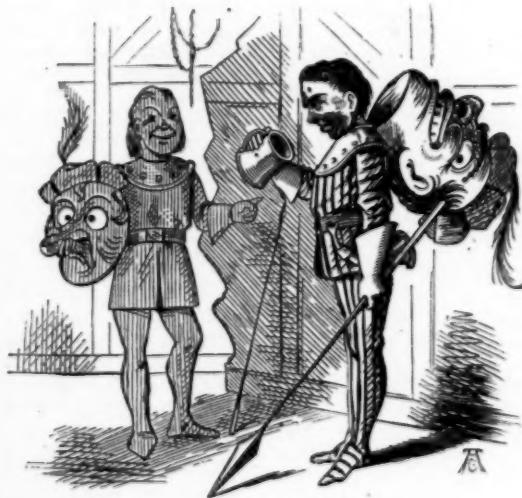
ful.' Mr. Buckstone, as the patron of art (a character to be found in a German version of this story), provokes hearty laughter, and would do so without the little he has had set down for him. Taken as a whole 'Pygmalion' is well worth seeing, and (not the least among its merits), it is not long.

At the Gaiety Mr. Toole is to be seen and heard, and, as that means laughter, no further hint is necessary from me. I always laugh at Toole. I am often told that I shouldn't do it. But it is the perversity of human nature, and specially of my nature to

prefer being tickled with daisies, (daisies better than straws), to being knocked down with a classic truncheon. When Keeley used to come on, stolid and silent, I greeted him with a shout of laughter not to be stifled. When Wright walked down the stage and looked at the audience, that was enough for me. Once I was obliged to leave the Hanover Square rooms when John Parry was giving an entertainment, he was too much for me, and I was too much for him and the audience. I was *L'homme qui rit*, and such an one is a very pleasant fellow (not in M. Hugo's novel) if he doesn't *rit* too loud. A 'laughist' (Americanised word, but expressive), can upset an

evening's amusement equally as well as a disagreeable fellow, who pays for the pleasure of loudly giving vent to his disapprobation. Once a polite man asked me to leave the room during some entertainment in order that I might recover myself, and I went. On another occasion a message was sent to me by one of the leading actors requesting me to retire to the back of my box if I wanted to laugh so boisterously. I subsided into the shadow, and sent an apology. But whither am I straying? Into the adventures of an *homme qui rit*? Perhaps so; but there's not space enough at present. I guard the relation of such matters till my next.

B. B.



THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

THE PRINCE OF WALES.

THERE will be no more remarkable chapter in the history of the Victorian era than that which relates to the recent critical illness of the Prince of Wales. It forms a chapter both in personal history and national history of a most instructive and unique description. When the Prince of Wales first fell ill there were not many beyond some far-sighted individuals, who discerned that a terrible danger had been incurred, and that a serious crisis must be expected. Typhoid fever never is nor can be anything else than a thoroughly dangerous disorder. Some time ago Dr. Haughton, of Dublin, made a calculation of the number of hours of vast physical labour in carrying immense weights that was equivalent to the tossings of a fever patient. Such a mode of expression enables us to understand something of this phase of human suffering. The illness with which the Prince was struck down acquired an intense association from the fact that it was the same to which his father succumbed. It is also an illness which is a regular scourge of our country, and one that almost decimates human life in our alleys and courts. What added to the common grief and indignation was the fact that the illness, to which countless precious lives have been sacrificed, is one that arises from entirely preventable causes, in other words, is due to the stupidity, neglect, and carelessness of people in responsible situations. The Prince's illness might almost be called a poor man's illness. The *sequela* of the illness in a local affection, is one most familiarly

found in the illnesses of the poor, and is almost universally ascribed by them, most erroneously, to inefficient nursing and doctoring. It was learned in rapid succession that the fever ran high, that it was attended by an awful complication of symptoms, that a dangerous relapse had taken place, thus the life of the royal sufferer was hanging on a thread, and that at any moment the end might come with appalling suddenness. The news spread everywhere with the very speed and agency of lightning, and the heart and mind of the whole civilized world turned towards that chamber of watching and waiting where, in a lonely village of Norfolk, the heir of England lay wrestling with the ghastly fever that oppressed and threatened utterly to crush him.

We all felt how ill we could spare our Prince. We all thought of the Queen, how she was adding sorrow to sorrow. As we went back in thought to those scenes of darkness and doubt ten years ago in Windsor Castle, which darkened the light of the land and left 'the crown a lonely splendour.' We thought of the bright, good Princess, who had won all hearts by her graciousness, the young wife and mother, so deeply stricken now, as might be the lowliest in the land. We felt how costly and valuable was the life at stake. How elaborate and careful had been the training of our Prince! How varied and extensive his culture! How great the range of his travel, his observation, and his experience! He might not be poet or critic, like the King of Sweden, or even be

like his mother, one of the most popular of authors. But he was every inch an English gentleman, and with a training and a range of social and intellectual life to which hardly any other English gentleman could have attained. From the education carefully planned for him by the most enlightened of fathers, he had availed himself of all his peculiar opportunities. He had travelled, he had conversed, he had examined for himself in a way that was possible for no other young man. It was known thus that those immense advantages had not been thrown away. Our Prince was intelligent, cultivated, shrewd to a very high degree. He had the merits of tact and of an even temper, so inestimable in his position. He was one of the most graceful and accomplished of social speakers. It was known that a genuine goodness of heart prompted all his courtliness. He had the high courage of his line, an eye that never forgot a face, a hand always open to charity, a pleasant glance or word for each. Those who knew him most thoroughly in his own country home, or in the many places where his temporary lot had been cast, were loudest and sincerest in his praises. We could ill afford to lose a Prince like this. With us, despite the language of a few theorists, personal government is a reality, rife with the deepest import to our wide-spread national interests. Few readers of history, few observers of contemporary politics, could contemplate without apprehension the chances of a contested regency or a long minority. The thunder had come from a clear sky, and so perilous was the risk we ran.

Never in the lifetime of any of us will the memory of those December days be forgotten. It will always be remembered with

what anxiety the telegrams were watched and waited for, how men in lonely country districts made long journeys to hear the news, how every social gathering of the town became a mockery and was at once laid aside, how the Jews led the way, and all denominations of Christians followed in supplicating the mercy of heaven, how the churches stood open the live-long day that the faithful might offer their petitions, how the Archbishop's prayer was flashed along the wires, how the population of great cities poured out towards the public places where the bulletins were displayed, how the funds sunk and rose with alternate reports, how the one theme on each lip and heart was the Prince. The first thought was about the patient. Men asked about the character of the medical men and the nature of the treatment. It was known that Sir William Jenner had made this illness his peculiar study, and that Dr. Gull, though hitherto unknown at the Court, had acquired an immense and unrivalled reputation in this country. Men are now asking what can compensate those gentlemen for untiring devotion, and whether the imperial precedent that made Nélaton a peer might not be wisely followed. When anxiety had been exchanged for joy we began to wonder at ourselves. The great national heart had been moved as perhaps it had never been moved before. It became understood how loyalty was a passion of the people of England, so keen and intense was that inextinguishable outburst of national feeling. Foreign nations wondered—the remarkable article in 'La France' will recur to many—at the attitude of the English people. A nation not given to demonstration had been agitated to the very depths. While the

bases of government were shaken elsewhere our own seemed founded on a rock. It was shown that we were a people at unity with ourselves, that the happiness of England was identified with that of the reigning House. It almost seemed as if the old theory of the divine right had a substantial basis and rested for its ultimate ground on a deep instinct of the human heart. It had so happened that there had been some seditious murmurs in the country, the reflex of the wave of French communism; and a small knot of political *doctrinaires* have always advocated organic changes of the most sweeping kind. It was difficult to know how in an age that tolerates the most absolute freedom of discussion such disloyalty could best be met. You cannot agitate for loyalty as another may agitate for sedition. The tiny wavelets show more stir and animation than the unfathomable depths below. But the answer of the nation comes in a mode of which we had not dreamed. That first whisper of alarm became as the voice of a mighty people, as the voice of many waters. Then was shown the generous temper of the English people, its contempt for the mere agitation and demagogue, its loyalty and true-heartedness, and soundness of feeling. Even the seditious found it to be their interest to mimic the language of loyalty and to chronicle each step of the illustrious patient towards convalescence. The illness of the Prince became even of less importance than the great self-revelation that was made to the nation of its own heart. As a political fact, it was of the highest significance. As an historical fact there is no page in our national history, no page even in European history, that exactly parallels it. The Queen's letter

sealed the added bond of affection between the throne and the people. The illness of the Prince was the great event in the year's history, an event contrasting so deeply in its surroundings with the unhappy state of France. The Christmas joy was renewed; once more with rekindled brightness we gave place to the happiness of the Christmas season. With such happy auguries the old year passed away and with bright hopes, in which our Prince reigned pre-eminent, our land moved towards the shrouded future.

It is sincerely to be hoped that this mighty ebullition of a nation's emotion will not pass away without enduring results. Much will be gained if we attempt to exorcise the feyer-fiend that has slain its thousands on the right hand or the left. Those who move about much from place to place little know what perils they are incurring, and probably many a well-ordered mansion abounds with the seeds of death. We are all now looking into our sanitary arrangements, and few of us are perhaps aware of the perils which they encounter. It will be a happy result if parliament can be persuaded to forsake sensational politics and promote the legislation that will save health, life, and limb. We almost pity the Prince of Wales when he comes 'to read his history in a nation's eyes' to glance over the file of the 'Times' or any newspaper in the land. What had he done, will be his thought, to be so beloved, and what answer can he make to the high-wrought devotion of the nation? His can only be the feeling that Milton so nobly portrays:

'A grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays at
once
Indebted and discharged.'

The country will not allow itself to doubt that the Prince will wisely use that precious gift of life with which he has been again entrusted. It has often been said, that after a fever the constitution renews itself as if with a fresh lease of life. It is a great turning-point from which life starts afresh. We trust that this will be the case with his Royal Highness, and that his perfect restoration to health will be a landmark in an active and beneficent career. Perhaps it cannot be better marked than by taking a more active share than has hitherto fallen to his lot in the duties of his exalted station, and making amends for the enforced absence of his royal mother. The remembrance of those 'painful terrible days,' as the Queen called them in her most touching letter, will always be a tender link between us and our king that is to be, teaching us not to estimate lightly the blessings that have been built up for us through the long course of the centuries, to remember the old legend, *Super antiquas vias stare*, and that old-world, divine admonition, to fear God and honour the king.

EXPLORATION AND TRAVEL.

Any glance at Mercator's map will easily satisfy us how extremely limited and imperfect, after all, is the geographical knowledge of our vaunted age. We map out outlines with rigorous exactness, and there is, perhaps, hardly any islet or rock but has its proper name and bearings; but there are whole continents of which our knowledge is scanty or only conjectural. We have fringed the seaboard with names, but the interiors are left almost untouched. We know, however, enough to be sure that there are

vast regions of boundless natural wealth and resources that are still to be opened up to the dominant English-speaking race, and that the earth could give sustenance beyond its thousand millions to a myriad millions more. The Malthusian speculations may practically be adjourned to a far distant era, if only emigration were simplified and made easier, and emigrants received, from the mother-country, adequate helps and safeguards. We are not, however, so far advanced in political philosophy as to be able to settle the true conditions and bearings of the emigration problem. We are unwilling to part with our best, and the colonies are unwilling to receive our worst. While we admit our comparative ignorance of geography, we are also able to see the immense efforts that are being made to remove it. Indeed, it requires some degree of knowledge in order to be conscious of our ignorance. We have all been living at an immense rate of vitality during the last one or two decades, at an intenser rate than has, perhaps, ever been known in human history. The imagination grows dizzy as it attempts to pierce into the future and its splendid possibilities. The world assumes, as it were, the shape of an ordered garden, all its provinces marked out with the completeness of counties or departments. Travel and exploration are now the order of the day, and will long continue to be so, in an accelerated ratio. The considerable, and growing, number of books published on these subjects is a significant sign of our English genius for colonization and adventure; and, after all, there are many adventurous noble careers that may yield permanent results, but, unhappily, no present record.

Two circumstances chiefly strike

us, in looking at the facts. The first, is the tendency to make immense journeys, which completely dwarf the old system of travel, and which now, through the railway and the steamboat, are made safely and expeditiously, with the chief drawback of a heavy expense. The second is, that the real hard work, and, probably, the main value of travel, is in exploration; and here the difficulties are immense. Individual efforts are parts of no organized scheme; everything is left to private enterprise; and our own Government—as in the case of the Livingstone expedition—proffers no assistance. Yet the amount of what is being done is astonishing, and makes us wish that imperial interests were identified with those of the Geographical Society. To show what has been done, we take up some books that have been published in only one part of the year, the winter quarter, and by no means all of these, although we have noted, we believe, the most important.

Let us turn first to Asia. Several works of exploration in the East are announced, of which Mr. Palmer's 'Desert of the Exodus' appears to be the most remarkable. The British Association expedition, for the exploration of Moab, is on the point of setting out. The birth-lands of the world will soon be thoroughly explored. Turning to China, a two-fold movement is to be observed. The coolie emigration, that has flooded San Francisco, shows signs of extending to New York; and if the drain of emigration continues from Ireland, and labour strikes extend in England, it is not impossible that even in Europe the inequalities of the labour market may be redressed from the overflowing populations of the East. On the

other hand, China and Japan are being opened up more and more to British energy and commerce. For practical purposes, what is especially needed is, that an immense number of useful hints, to be found in books of travel, should not be lost by Government and by men of mercantile enterprise. We know of a rich merchant who happened, one day, to be amusing himself with reading the geographical articles in the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica.' Struck with an account given of some remote islands, he sent out some merchant vessels thither, and succeeded in realising a handsome profit. Mr. Shaw's work on Tartary, Yarkand, and Kashgar,* that has been long expected with keen interest, is a genuine example of exploration which may be fertile in practical results. Some time ago we discussed the 'Travels of Marco Polo,' according to Colonel Yule's magnificent edition. Mr. Shaw has been travelling in the steps of Marco Polo, with a large portion of energy and success. He frequently has occasion to cite Marco Polo's wonderful narrative. The region known as Chinese Tartary has within late years undergone a revolution, in which a native race and native king have supplanted the Chinese rule; and an independent nation may interpose a barrier to Russian aggression. This gives Mr. Shaw's work a political importance; and we see that Government has now given him a commissionership. Living much in the Himalayas, and well versed in Asiatic travel, he cast a longing eye on the untravelled regions beyond; and, undeterred by the disastrous fate of preceding travellers, he determined to try his fortune. It was his ambition to

* 'Visits to High Tartary, Yarkand, and Kashgar.' By Robert Shaw. Murray.

map out Eastern Turkistan, which hitherto was a blank for geographers. He started as a merchant, fitted with an assortment of goods proper for the Yarkand market. He was not accredited with any representative character, and he carefully disclaimed such; but he sent a messenger in advance, and trusted to presents as powerful auxiliaries. His narrative is full of interest. He was often detained on the march, and when, at last, he reached the king, or Atalik-Ghazee, we imagine that it was very much a moot question whether he should be loaded with presents—which pleasantly proved to be the case—or should be put to death as an interloper. He seems to have acted with great skill and adroitness, and probably disposed the Atalik's mind to intercourse and commerce with Europeans. His book is thrown into the shape of a diary. This hinders the literary form of the work, but adds to its life-like character; and our readers had better be posted up in the historical statements of his work.

A genuine work of exploration, and that of a very useful kind, was that undertaken by the late Captain Forsyth, in the Highlands of Central India. His volumes enable us to understand how the Indian Government realizes the vast functions to which it has been called, and in fulfilling a beneficent mission in developing the resources of the country, and promoting civilization and Christianity among our Hindoo fellow-subjects. Ten years ago the department of the Central Provinces was constituted, and a staff of officers, who worked with British pluck and zeal, set to work to explore thoroughly some thirty-six thousand miles of hill district, with about the same superficies of forest land to the south. Leaving

to others scientific surveys and statistics, Captain Forsyth pleasantly relates all that can be told, in an easy narrative, of the physical geography, resources, native races, natural history, capabilities of the region, with many interesting details of the adventures of exploration. The region is very interesting as the middle ground where the flora and fauna of Upper and Lower India meet. It is as forest land, extending to the enormous amount of 44,000 square miles, that these possessions have their chief value for us; and in all the forestry the teak is the most valuable timber. We have, reversing all precedents of injustice, admitted the hill tribes to full ownership in these wastes, under wise restrictions about the destruction of wood. There is a good deal of hard reading in the work, besides the stories of sport and adventures. Captain Forsyth had a singularly keen, thoughtful mind. He, unhappily, died just before the publication of his work on the 'Highlands of Central India.' There is one forcible suggestion which he makes, from his vast experience of India, which we trust will not be lost sight of, though he can no more urge it on the Indian Government. He speaks of tigers that, in various instances, have closed the public roads, depopulated and wasted villages, devoured human beings by the hundred and cattle by the thousand. The evil seems likely to increase, as Government has, unwisely, lowered the reward for the destruction of these animals; and Captain Forsyth states the loss of life and property in the Central Provinces to be enormous. He is sure that the Government could easily find numbers of ardent sportsmen among their servants who would be happy to give their

services in hunting down such game; and every commissariat yard has scores of elephants applicable for the service. The necessity would be that there should be well-organized expeditions, and the extra expenses of riflemen and elephants should be paid by Government. It will be well if this excellent suggestion of a valuable officer should not be lost sight of, nor a useful public service be rejected because it comes in the guise of sport.

Another book of genuine exploration is Mr. Poole's account of Queen Charlotte Islands.* Travellers' manuscripts have to undergo a deal of travelling. Mr. Shaw's narrative made some five voyages between Europe and Asia, and Mr. Poole, broken down by his exertions and exposure, waited two years, and then handed over his papers to an editor, Mr. Lyndon. For a hundred years the islands named 'Queen Charlotte,' with all their rich capabilities for improvement and colonization, have been left totally untouched, without even an Admiralty survey. Mr. Poole went out there to 'prospect' copper mines, but his men, well-fed and well-paid, after a time, absolutely refused to work. He could not make them, and complains bitterly that he had no power, analogous to that of the captain of a man-of-war, to compel them. Here, again, is a matter where Government might beneficially interfere, in giving necessary magisterial powers to the leaders of colonizing parties. The Colonial Office might take various useful hints from Mr. Poole—only they are not at all likely to do so—as in regulating the tariff with the Indians, and

forbidding the sale of 'fire-water' largely adulterated with vitriol. Mr. Poole, finding that his men would not work, determined on leaving them. He was enabled to do this by friendly Indians; and with their help he was enabled to make the longest and most adventurous canoe voyage on record, with the exception, perhaps, of Captain Bligh's after the mutiny of the 'Bounty.' For many consecutive days the Hindoos paddled away in an awful struggle for their own lives, and for his. Their contest was with tides, currents, hostile nations, and a huge tidal wave of the most sensational description. Our adventurous engineer has brought us back a series of careful observations. He reports that the climate is healthy, milder than that of Scotland; the inlets of the sea are countless, with the purest water near the beach, and probably lakes in the mountains; the harbourage magnificent; the arable land rich beyond description and entirely unappropriated; 'one might safely predict an agricultural prosperity unrivalled on the face of the globe.' The woods are immensely rich in cedars; the game is a marvel. 'No colonist need starve if he possesses a gun and can hit a haystack.' Mr. Poole thinks that our first necessity is to open up a North Pacific railway through the British dominions. We trust Mr. Poole will soon be quite well again, and, with the help of Government, or some great capitalist, return, under happier auspices, to carry on his benevolent work of developing the resources of this virgin colony.

The same lesson of the boundless resources of the Empire, and the most inadequate degree in which these resources are utilized, or even known, is set forth in Mrs. Millett's work on Western

* 'Queen Charlotte Islands. A Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific.' By Francis Poole, C.E. Hurst and Blackett.

Australia.* This volume might well deserve to be published as a Parliamentary Blue Book, a most admirable report on the condition and prospects of the colony. The lady's husband went out as a chaplain to convicts; and we are not surprised to gather that they did not like it overmuch, and came back as soon as they could. The Swan River Settlement is in bad odour. Some rascally agents persuade poor ignorant people that when once they are out that they are very near any other part of Australia to which they may wish to go. When they get out they find sometimes that they must stay for years before they can raise the means to proceed to Melbourne or Adelaide. West Australia signalized itself by asking for convicts ('Government men' they always call themselves) when they had been repudiated by the other States in the expectation of a large expenditure of Crown money; but now they have been fairly repudiated by West Australia. Our system was both economical and humane; but it told with terrible effect on the manumitted convict who tried to struggle back to a reputable life. If ever our transportation system is revived—which will perhaps be a necessity of the future, and we have many other lands besides Australia which could be thus utilized—the light here thrown on our latest experiment this way will be full of interest. The colony has all kinds of drawbacks, natural and social, and they are set down by the authoress in an unrelenting way. But the study of her final chapter enables us to see that a great future may be in

* 'An Australian Parsonage; or, the Settler and the Savage in Western Australia.' By Mrs. Edward Millett. Stanford.

reserve for this youngest and most despised of our colonies. Thousands of square miles are covered with magnificent forests whose native mahogany rivals heart of oak. It is found that it is pretty well indestructible. The amount of sandal-wood is immense; there might well be a most prosperous whale-fishery. Moreover, the great Australian Bight has been recently traversed, and it is not improbable that water may be found; and geologists are beginning to predict a discovery of gold. Oysters are illimitable; a pearl-fishery is suggested; and there is some talk about petroleum. According to the latest advices the drooping colony is about to raise its head. Our general impression is, that there are no difficulties which may not be allayed by time and effort, and that success, when it comes, will be great indeed.

Mr. Carlisle has really made a voyage round the world.* He recommends any one to do the same who has a couple of years and some fifteen hundred pounds to spare. He did it himself in thirteen months, and he candidly tells us that he thinks he gave himself too little time. We think so, too; but at the same time Mr. Carlisle shows great pluck and intelligence, and is always a pleasant companion. He went by steamer to Suez, thence to Calcutta, ran up the country to the Himalayas, thence to Penang and Singapore, to China, to Japan, thence over five thousand miles of sea to San Francisco. He visited the mammoth trees and the Yosemité valley, and then sailed down the west coast

* 'Round the World in 1870: an Account of a brief tour through India, China, Japan, California, and South America.' By A. D. Carlisle, B.A., Tri. Col. Camb. H. S. King and Co.

to Panama. He continued his voyage down the old western coast of South America, passing through the Straits of Magellan, of which we have a very animated account, then proceeding to Buenos Ayres and Rio de Janeiro, going up country and camping out on the Pampas. It will be seen that he just missed the Eastern Archipelago, Australia, New Zealand, the States, Canada, of which most voyages round the world tell us much; but there is a certain immaturity of mind in the work which perhaps would suggest that Mr. Carlisle would not add greatly to the public stock of ideas on government and colonization. In future days such a journey as Mr. Carlisle's may be a mere matter of course, but as it stands at present, it is a highly creditable and enterprising performance. Mr. Carlisle in his notes brings down every part of his story to the present date; and to young readers especially, who have to make acquaintance with the literature of geography, his book will prove both valuable and attractive.

Though scarcely works of exploration, we may mention, in conjunction with this, two books of American travel by London editors, reprinted from their respective magazines, our esteemed contemporaries the 'Leisure Hour' and the 'People's Magazine.' These are respectively by a 'London Parson' and by Dr. James Macaulay. The 'London Parson' has

told his story in the 'Times,' and elsewhere besides; he tells it in a peculiarly racy, effective way, and has a very attractive idiosyncrasy of his own. Dr. Macaulay's work, 'Across the Ferry,'* is a model, in its way, of what a book of American travel ought to be. He went out determined to be pleased with his American hosts, in a spirit not of criticism, but of thorough appreciation. In his kindly, enlightened way Dr. Macaulay has much to tell us, much to discuss: in fact, he is a little too enlightened, for in his desire to do justice to America he is on one occasion unjust to us; we are not aware that we have any Charity abuses that can be fairly compared with the New York Tammany system. Dr. Macaulay oddly attributes to Goldsmith the famous lines which Johnson interpolated in the 'Traveller.' One feature in his book is very valuable, and might well be studied both by travellers and by the authorities at home. He carefully notes the different points in which the Americans have a decided advantage over us, and recommends them for imitation. This is giving us much of the real cream of travel. Dr. Macaulay's travels were more limited in scope than any of those which we have mentioned, but none excel him in the observant, thoughtful, and generous tone of his volume.

* 'Across the Ferry; First Impressions of America and its People.' By Dr. Macaulay. Hodder and Stoughton.

